

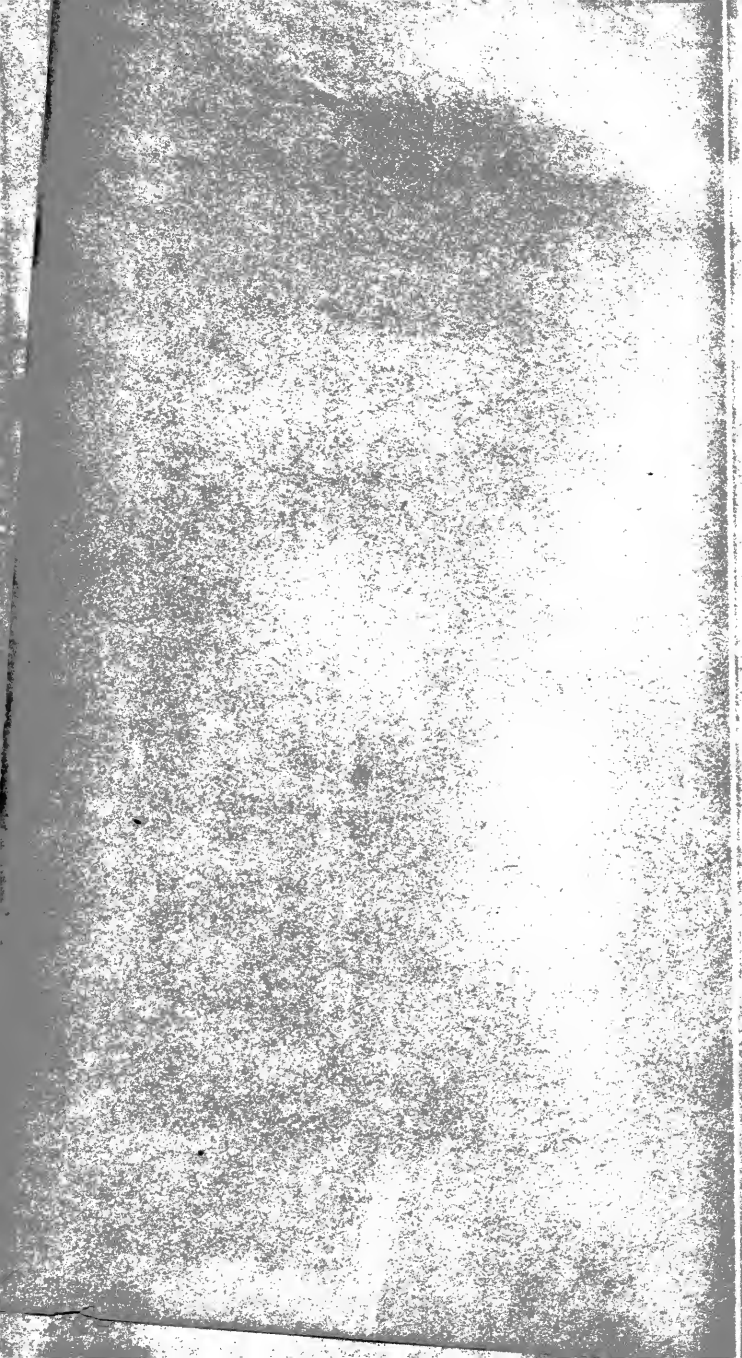




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FRUIT OF WESTERN LIFE;

OR

BLANCHE,

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY

DAVID REEVE ARNELL.

“First fruit of fancy and of toil,
Child of few hours, and those most fugitive.”

WIFFEN'S TASSO.

NEW-YORK:
J. C. RIKER, 129 FULTON-STREET.
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TO WILLIAM F. COOPER, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND :

A desire, (in which I know you participate,) that I should be fairly represented especially in the South and West, has induced me to collect into this little volume, these fugitive Poems, many of which have already appeared under my name, in sundry Magazines and Newspapers of the day. I have no other apology to offer for presenting this book to the Public. I have done it in sincerity, as the very best thing I could do ; and though I am sensible that the experience of a longer period of years than make up my life, would enable me to attain to a more complete expression of the truths I would utter, yet I could not bear to let these little songs be so soon forgotten ; and in giving them to the Publisher, I feel, likewise, that I have discharged a debt of gratitude to those friends who have always received them kindly,—may I not hope, for some other reason, than merely because they are mine ?

I have only to add, that the Tale which I have placed in the van, is simply a memento of very early years, which I have still the heart to preserve, by reason of the associations with which the composition of it is connected. The shorter Poems

must speak for themselves. It has been a desire with me, for a long time, that I might be able to contribute something that should, at least, be characterized by purity of sentiment, and I may add, by earnestness of tendency, to the Literature of the growing West. The result of my efforts, thus far, are the following pages.

To you, my friend, I am indebted for much that I have done. Your confidence in me has never wavered, and your word of "courage" has never failed. I feel most deeply what I am now doing;—and in dedicating this volume to you, let me beg of you to look upon the act (all slight as it may seem to the world) as the sincerest heart-return I have the power to bestow;—and let us both indulge the hope that no feeling less gentle may ever spring up between us, than that which now prompts this offering, or than that which, I know, will induce you to accept it.

Your friend,

Columbia, Tenn.

D. R. ARNELL.

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P O E M S.

B L A N C H E :

A T A L E O F T H E H E A R T .

Isa. And was she proud, sir ?

Lord I. Or I had not lov'd her.

Isa. Then runs my lesson wrong. I ever read
Pride was unlovely.

Lord I. Dost thou prate

Of books ?

L O R D I V O N A N D H I S D A U G H T E R .

P A R T I .

I .

A T H I N G as fair as summer skies,
With golden hair and sun-bright eyes,
And heart as light as winds that play
Across the heaven of some blue day,
Was Blanche, when first we met, and when
Her summers only number'd ten ;—

And I of scarcely riper years,
And these most strangely fill'd with tears.
For I had been the loneliest one
Of all beneath God's blessèd sun ;
Orphan'd of parents and of heart,
In common things I took no part ;—
They said I was a wayward boy,—
I know I chas'd full many a toy,
I know my hopes flew up too high,
I could not rest beneath the sky ;—
And so they taunted me,—but still
A spirit in me spurn'd their will ;
For me their lot seem'd all too low,
I mounted, where the eagles go,
Beyond the sky, and dream'd alone,
Then sank to earth with tear and groan.
I say, the dew of tender youth
Fell on a heart of sad unruth,
And when I found a human love,
I set it on a throne above,
Gave it an angel's voice, and hung
Enraptur'd on the song it sung.
Oh ! she was wondrous, wondrous fair,
As day and sunlight always are,—

Men almost fear'd to see that child
The object of a heart so wild ;
They look'd on Blanche's innocence,
They studied my own look intense—
They're doubly damn'd who gave her soul
An off'ring to their fear's control.—
Hush ! I've no power to chide the *two*
From whom that lovely scion grew—
My spirit ill their kindness sees,
Dear God ! judge Thou 'twixt me and these.
No matter—I have borne it all ;
We meet in no Earth judgment-hall,—
No matter—I have strength to tell
The blight that o'er my spirit fell ;
For time has had no power to set
My brow in changeless sternness yet,
But sometimes still a ghost is wrought
Upon it of one pleasant thought,—
The thought how gayly Blanche and I
Once sported 'neath the self-same sky.

II.

Ah ! well I lov'd the solitude,—
Then did God's handiwork seem “good ;”

And still unto my loving gaze,
It yields some most enchanting rays.
A landscape, drawn 'neath summer skies,
Is pleasant to my heart and eyes ;
Fair is the rainbow,—sweet the moon
Feeding the quiet heart of June ;
The clouds are often wildly bright,
And beauteous is the sun's last light :
And oftentimes yet it speaks to me
In wooing accents, eloquently :—
The streamlets have a quiet voice,
And birds and breezes cry “ rejoice ;”
But when that love began to twine
Its tendrils round this heart of mine,—
When first I felt the mystery
That my proud soul no more was free,—
'Twas passing sweet, and yet 'twas strange,
To sit, and muse upon the change
That o'er my soul had come,—no more
It lov'd them as it lov'd before ;
For what to me were sun and sky
When not reflected in her eye ?
And what strange wonder might a stream
Babble out in its moonlight dream,

Did she not in her beauty sit
Beside me, and interpret it ?
Oh ! it is fearful thus to bind
Our thoughts to one of human kind.—
I drank her beauty with the light ;
Hers were the dreamings of my night ;
I deem'd the very mountain air
Swung from her curls of breezy hair,
For me God bade the roses sip
Their blessèd fragrance from her lip—
Her laugh was in the voice of rills,
Her thought upon the solemn hills.
She was my life,—and still no love
I know, save her, and One above.

I I I .

As goldenly that pleasant time
Flow'd by us as a fairy rhyme,
I knew not how my life went on,
I had no life when she was gone ;
And yet I never breath'd her name ;
Men only mark'd my brow of flame,
And all who saw us, tell-tales were
Of feelings close 'twixt me and her.

Oh, we were happy !—song and flowers
The links were of those precious hours.
At morn, beneath the whispering trees
We sought the sweethearts of the breeze ;
Our pulses play'd a richer tune
Beneath the golden feel of noon ;
At eve we watch'd the stars on high,
Scarce seen beyond the twilight sky,
And marvell'd if that curtain broad
Were the white shielding wing of God.
I ask not—can ye truly tell
Where happier ones on earth may dwell ?—
Have ye seen spirits from the sky ?
Were they more blest than Blanche and I ?

I V .

Years pass'd—I watch'd the opening flower,—
More fair she grew each passing hour,
Till by my side at length she stood
In graceful, beauteous womanhood ;
And on her brow that trace of thought
Was yet more spiritually wrought,
And on her lip a prouder curl
Sat sentinel, than, when a girl,

It oft press'd mine, and thought no harm.
 She grew more chary of the charm,—
 We met,—but with beseeching eyes,
 And fewer questions and replies,
 And in my heart I felt a strange,
 I know not but a pleasing change.
 I thought me then of future days,
 I tried my fainting hopes to raise ;—
 I say we met, but oh ! no more
 We met like children as before ;
 For less we spake of outward things,
 And more of what the spirit sings ;
 We talk'd of common acts in life,
 We sometimes spake of “ man and wife,”
 And idly wonder'd if the heart
 Beat never from its choice apart.
 I cannot say how strove my will
 To keep all dark forebodings still ;
 But yet I feared—though e'en that fear
 Had something in it strangely dear,
 And this would turn to sudden joy,
 And I would be again a boy,
 And Blanche my joyous playmate—then
 A woman she would seem again,

A woman—and it rack'd me sore,
She might not love her playmate more ;—
I knew that she was proud, and I
Possess'd a soul untam'd and high
As eagles, that refus'd to bow,—
It did not then—nor doth it now.

V.

It was a summer evening's close,
The spirit that shuts up the rose,
As lulled by sweetness had forgot
His office, and each fragrant spot
Was breathing still its odors forth
Upon the robes of air and earth,—
And there were gentle breezes blowing,
And streams that tinkled in their flowing,—
While floating where the Godhead burns,
The stars had fill'd their quivering urns,
And swung them through the vaulted sky,
Like lamps, deliriously high,
In angels' hands, that nightly keep
Their sentry o'er the world asleep,—
And here and there a little cloud
Dipp'd in the light its ghostlike shroud,

Then melted in the yielding blue,
Like some fair pinion trembling through ;—
'Twas all so bright, below, above,
The gladsome earth seem'd ta'en with love,—
And like a child whose joy is high,
It danced beneath the radiant sky.—
I deem'd, if angels ever leant
O'er evening's sapphire battlement,
I deem'd, if e'er their footsteps trod
Elsewhere than the bright courts of God,
They had been lur'd those courts to leave
For earth, upon that blessed eve.

VI.

It was a time for holy vows
Beneath moon-interlacèd boughs ;
It were not strange that such a night
Should hear full many a heart's troth-plight ;—
And in that wild, enchanting ray
Two lovers sat, and one as day
Was beautiful, and both were young,
And love was faltering on their tongue ;
Hopes cherish'd long, yet unexpress'd,
Were leaping from each burning breast ;

Her robe that lightly rose and fell,
But half conceal'd her bosom's swell.
He wander'd o'er that matchless face,
Her curls shower'd o'er love's dwelling place ;
His eye drank in the madd'ning fire
From those wave-crests of warm desire,
Then fell so soft that whisper'd word,
Naught save the trembling spirit heard ;
And now she bent her angel form,
One passionate embrace, and warm,
Was wildly given ;—if we must,
Whenever we return to dust,
For every burning moment take
An age of torture,—what shall slake
The torment of that soul which hath
Seen loving ones around its path,
And yielded to their heavenly charms,
And madly sunk into their arms ?—
They pledg'd their love, and seal'd the vow ;—
Pray, reader, can you tell me now,
Who were the lovers ?—guess again,—
Ay, guess a thousand times in vain,—
No faery sprite bask'd in that sky,—
Hurrah ! hurrah ! 'twas Blanche and I !

VII.

I cannot tell what first I felt,
When as I worshipp'd her, and knelt,
In holy trance before her shrine,
One heart I found laid next to mine
Upon that solemn altar ; I
Must pass those burning moments by.
He was a youth of quiet mood,—
Perhaps my life was all too rude ;
He spake to her of gold and lands,
My heritage was honest hands ;
But still 'twas difficult to let
His impress in that heart be set,—
'Twas fearful that e'en he should dare
With me her bounteous love to share ;
(For bounteous though love be, we must
Have all within our sacred trust ;)
And though he might have meant not ill,
The heart is its own prophet still,
And friends that would be friends must not
Intrude within that holy spot ;—
For love is awful, and it keeps
A watch that never tires, nor sleeps,

And springs at shadows.—Day by day,
He drew my better thoughts away,—
I found it difficult to smile
While he was smiting me the while.—
To meet him kindly,—hotly press
Aught that had burn'd with her caress ;—
I loath'd him,—though I show'd no sign
Of hatred in one act of mine ;—
I heard her parents praise his name,
I spake no withering word of blame :—
Had they not given my angel birth,
We should not now all live on earth ;—
I've look'd full in the face of death
For far less slanderous puffs of breath
Than they sent forth to blast me then.—
I will pay insult back again ;
The worm must mouth my rotting cheek,
Ere I will bear contempt, nor speak !
But they were safe—for her dear sake
My soul refus'd its thirst to slake ;—
I told her all one happy day,—
She smil'd, nor turn'd her cheek away,
But bade me press it ;—Ah ! I could
Have melted in the melting flood

Of joy, that o'er my spirit came,—
 But then I was a child of shame !
 And quick I stifled every hope,
 Nor thought with higher claims to cope ;—
 I knew some maids the world call'd fair,—
 It bade me their delights to share,—
 It told me such as these would suit
 My station, and it spake the truth,—
 But yet I loath'd their vapid charms,
 My only heaven was Blanche's arms.
 I told her all.—Cried she, “ before
 The God we both love and adore,—
 As He is changeless, never ! never !
 I bear a heart unchang'd for ever !”

VIII.

She married ! yes, that *other* ;—I
 Need waste no words to tell ye why ;—
 Blanche ! I'll not trail the serpent's slime
 O'er that dear, injur'd breast of thine.
 'Tis fearful for two hearts to yearn
 Upon each other, love, yet turn,
 And let a thing of common clay
 Handle the cup we throw away !

To feel, despite of change and time,
Those hearts will flow like fairy rhyme,
In mingled measure, pure and free,
On in their own Eternity.—
I say, 'tis fearful, then, to trust
Their shrines in hands of worldly lust ;—
The deed was done—she married—I
With unblanch'd cheek stood calmly by,
Nor falter'd I when by his side
I saw her stand a blushing bride ;
For well I knew when there she stood
Yet in the pride of maidenhood,
Her heart went not out with the vow
Her lips were idly breathing now.
I saw her cast one sudden glance
Upon me ; then, as if in trance
She stood ; and when he took her hand,
Her face was not discolor'd—and
She hardly knew it when he press'd
His lip to hers, and fain caress'd.
One moment, in my inmost heart,
I felt the tide of anger start,—
One moment, and I would have hurl'd
The wretch to the eternal world,—

Oh, Heaven ! 'twas awful, thus to see
My only joy snatch'd, torn, from me.—
I say that then, one moment, one,
Hell's darkest deed had there been done ;
I would have rush'd and quickly made
The wife a widow—there was laid
A sinewy arm upon my frame ;
I felt the fast increasing flame—
But God be thank'd—it pass'd, and then
A calmness stole o'er me again ;—
And when the flaming bowl was quaff'd,
I pass'd it round and gaily laugh'd ;—
Laugh'd, while the color mounted up
In Blanche's face—I waved my cup,
And swore she was an angel now—
An angel, but *I* would not bow.—
She felt the sneer, and then upon
The arm of her new-married one
She lean'd, until her grief was o'er,—
I turn'd, and louder laugh'd once more :
It was a triumph, but apart
From this, that laugh chill'd e'en *my* heart !

PART II.

They did not know how pride can stoop,
When baffled feelings withering droop ;
They did not know how hate can burn
In hearts once changed from soft to stern.

BYRON.

I.

To hearts that love, and love in vain,
The very joy of youth brings pain ;
The smiles of light that round them beam
Fling on their waste a frightful gleam ;—
As when upon some loathsome sight
We throw a flash of heaven's light,
Which only serves to show the gloom
That wraps a doleful, living tomb.—
My heart declined, and, day by day,
I felt some new desire give way,—
Something I used to love and bless,—
Something that met my warm caress ;—
One only love was left me still,
One only passion ruled my will ;
I sought again the solitude,
Where bitter thoughts might not intrude,

Where the sweet whispers breathing round
Might shed nepenthe o'er my wound ;
And in this bright and glorious West
Sleeps many a happy bower of rest ;
For it has wealth of land and streams,
And clouds float o'er its breast like dreams,
And hills stand sentry, and the sun
Looks kindly all its haunts upon :—
'Twere strange that in a land like this
The heart could e'er be drain'd of bliss.—
I say that mine could not forget
The beauteousness of nature yet ;
And Blanche had wove God's blessèd things
More closely round its trembling strings ;
And sometimes, still, the mountain air
Would lightly toss my curling hair
Like her slight fingers, and the sky
Look'd tender as her thoughtful eye,
And I would lose all sense of pain
When mem'ry wove its woof again,
Till I was forced to press my brow
Upon my hands, and wildly vow
She should be mine ;—but, ah ! my brain
Would reel whene'er I thought again.

'Twas past—'twas past—for ever past,—
I'd ta'en my first embrace and last ;—
No matter—'twas a fiendish thought,
Yet in my brain it wildly wrought ;
She was unhappy—even she
Pined in her solitude for me ;—
And then I said, I'll watch the hour
When thou shalt be within my power ;—
'Tis base, I know, such guilt to tell,
But yet I watch'd, and found it well.

II.

My love had chang'd to sullen hate ;
I loath'd her from that very date,—
But yet I kept my feelings press'd
Deep in the chambers of my breast,
And my lips wore as glad a smile
As in my better days, for while
My heart was burning for the power
Of sweet revenge, the fated hour
I had not seen ; I waited only
For some regret to cross her path ;
When in her heart, all sad and lonely,
As where the storm his footsteps hath,

There should not be a living thing,
Round which its tendrils still might cling.

III.

And did I say I loved her not ?
Desire was all that was forgot.
And did I say I loathed her charms ?
I loathed the thing within her arms.
He spurn'd me,—hear it—even he,—
Her mate,—a cur of “ low degree,”
A doubly pitiful ingrate,
Whom we may crush, but cannot hate !
The worm may look upon the star—
He drove me from her sight afar !
What marvel scorn began its tread,
And 'neath its path shrank conscience dead ;
While like a flame of leaping fire
Mounted the trampling devil higher,
Burn'd on my cheek, flash'd through my eyes,
Hurl'd back its fearful, swift replies ;—
Chok'd me with vengeance,—struggled, burst
In fury o'er the thing accurs'd !

I V .

Send down thy pitying angel, God !
To weep above the path I've trod.
I've no compunctious throbs or fears,—
I have no fountain left of tears.
What I have done I'll do again ;
The crocodile hath tears as vain
As mine could be ;—I still will feel
Through blood, and crime, and fire, and steel,
My way to quiet,—still will wreak
My feelings upon act, and seek
A wild and dreary solitude
Of soul, where hate shall not intrude,
Rather than live to be the jest
Of those I loathe ;—I will have rest !
What words are these ? I know not, and
I may not change them,—let them stand :—
Weep thou, dear angel, if it be
Repentant tears must fall for me.

V .

He died,—I tell not where, nor how,—
He is forgot,—what boots it now ?

I only say the gorgeous West
 Of direful deed hath been the test ;
 On prairies broad the grass is rank
 Above full many a madcap prank,
 While happy birds still o'er may go,
 And many a reckless buffalo.—
 Why speak ?—for Blanche could never guess
 I bore one trace of gladness less
 From that sad hour.—Men talk'd of crime,
 But this ceas'd in a little time ;
 They spake of foul deeds somehow done
 In caves where never look'd the sun ;
 They said the West was vast and broad,
 They spake of the great eye of God ;—
 But all, I say, soon seem'd a doubt ;
 They sought no more to find it out,
 Till what, in sooth, his fate might be,
 They made no askings,—nor should ye.

V I .

I said I found the hour ;—he died,
 And left an infant by her side ;
 A boy so sportive, gay, and wild
 It grew, that it her heart beguil'd.

I saw this, and I turn'd once more,
And bow'd to her I lov'd before.
'Twas strange no other love could twine
Between that fair one's heart and mine ;
There never could ;—but yet I felt
A change upon me as I knelt
Once more in worship at her shrine ;
I lov'd not as in former time.
For I had learn'd to mock and jest ;
I thought as my love was the rest.
My lip was wreath'd in scornings proud ;
Men spake of Blanche, my laugh was loud.
Oh ! it is fearful thus to smile,
And hide a tortur'd heart the while,—
'Tis as the pleasant fields that lay
On Etna's bosom of decay,
Ere the consuming devil there
Has scath'd each ling'ring impress fair :
And so my lips no traces wore
Of what my fever'd spirit bore ;
I bound them in a breathless spell,
Taught them to mimic gladness well ;—
And Blanche, e'en Blanche knew not the soul
Where once she sat, and rul'd the whole,

For she had leant her spirit's wing
 Awhile upon a meaner thing,
 And all its hues had caught a stain
 That mirror'd not my heart again ;—
 Nay, hear me on,—my soul was bent
 To carry out its fell intent,—
 To wed her ?—No ! I could not press
 The lips that burn'd with the caress
 Of him I hated,—could not sigh
 For love that had been tasted ; I
 Felt my proud heart too sorely wrung
 Ever to be again re-strung.—
 Was she less fond, or I less true ?
 Ye'll soon know all—come hear me through.

VII.

I said her boy was wild and gay ;—
 I loath'd him, for each passing day
 His features seemed more like his sire,
 And this drunk up my heart like fire.
 'Twas on a night of storm and fear,
 I sat her fainting heart to cheer ;
 The swift wind drove the thunder blast,
 The watery deluge poured as fast ;

My soul was in the scene—the cloud
Was like its own funereal shroud ;
But Blanche was desolate—her heart
In storm and tempest took no part,
For o'er it had the death wind blown ;
One living thing was left alone,
And that was little ; and she tried
Her tell-tale blush of guilt to hide.
Her boy lay sick upon her breast ;
She sang him to his troubled rest,
Then turned her lustrous eyes on me
One moment—one—and I was free
From anger and from deadly hate.
One moment—'twas a heavenly state
Of joy, and peace, so calm, so sweet,
I ne'er expect again to meet
On earth ;—I say, I did forget
The pride that was not conquer'd yet—
And I spake gentle words, and she
Smiled gladly in her ecstasy
Of bliss. I felt within my hair
Her fingers light as summer air ;
I felt her bosom heave upon
The breast of her beloved one ;

I heard her words—" Oh, wilt thou not
 Let all—all—all—be now forgot ?
 Oh ! as thou hop'st for peace in heaven,
 May not thy Blanche be yet forgiven ?"
 I know not if the damn'd in hell
 Struggle as fiercely or as well ;—
 I stirr'd not—breath'd not—liv'd not then
 Was Blanche, dear Blanche, my own again ?
 Oh, Heaven, the bliss !—but in my heart
 I felt my wounded feelings start ;
 There was one love that might not be,
 There lay the thing I could not see,—
 Ah ! Blanche mistook her pleading power—
 She wrought her ruin in that hour.
 She handed me her child—'twas o'er—
 I could contain myself no more ;
 And with a word of bitter scorn,
 I hurl'd from me her eldest born
 And only child,—the spell was broke,
 Though not a word of grief she spoke,
 And when we parted, 'twas to meet
 Before God's fearful judgment-seat.

VIII.

I'm fain to think that infant fair
Is where God's holy angels are :
He died before another day
Had track'd o'er earth its golden way.
I would have left that hope to throw
Its balm o'er Blanche's heart of woe,
But whither she soon pass'd to dwell
They know the truth of such things well.
Men spake to me of how she died—
They chid my selfish, cruel pride.
I bore their pity as their scorn—
The first act left my heart forlorn,
And when I stood beside her bier,
I might have shed a straggling tear,
But that was all—and 'twas for her
When I was first her worshipper—
'Twas not for Blanche when she had given
Her hand away—though never riven
I knew her heart had been from me ;
I bless'd the day that set her free,
For well I knew those thoughts would burn
Till dust should to its dust return.

I say my heart was broke at first—
Death came—'twas but the mock'ry burst !
I know not but it made me glad ;
I grew more calm, if not less sad,
For now that scorn had work'd its will,
A spirit in me lov'd her still.

I X .

Ye cannot read upon my face
One sign of that consuming trace,
The fire beneath my fever'd brow
Expir'd, and all is ashes now ;
'Tis like the sculptur'd stillness death
Bequeaths the form with parted breath,
The rigid, beautiful repose
That will o'er fiercest struggles close.
And ye have mark'd me turn away
From scenes where all was blithe and gay,
And muse apart—or if I chance
Gaze on the phantoms of the dance,
'Twas only as a worshipper,
To seek once more the form of her,
This heart's first idol and its last,
On whom its all of love was cast.

I cannot see what I have seen,
I cannot be what I have been,
Yet oh ! if I seem calm—say not
My heart is cold—I've ne'er forgot
That with'ring flame, and first must die,
And meet once more must Blanche and I.

1842.

DREAMS.

. " Sleep,
But a continuance of enduring thought,
. these eyes but close
To look within." BYRON'S MANFRED.

I.

DREAMS, bright dreams !

Visions sent on the wings of sleep,
Gladd'ning the universe, where do ye steep
Your robes in glory, that thus ye wear
The lustre and beauty of uppermost air ?
In the brightness that decketh the rainbow's hues ?
Where light is spangling the fragrant dews ?
Do ye bathe where the flash of stars grows dim
In the kindling glow of the cherubim ?
That thus ye are sent
From the firmament

To lighten the heart with your bursting gleams,
In dreams, bright dreams ?

I I .

Dreams, bright dreams !

Do spirits that dwell in light and song
Breathe melody out as they glide along ?
Have they a power to catch and fling
Their notes o'er the slumb'ring heart's harp-string ?
Or where the anthems of Paradise
Are floating along in the far, far skies,—
Bring they from thence some wild'ring strain
To swell o'er the human heart again,
As an Angel's shout
Were pouring it out,
And heaven is opening, the rapt soul deems,
In dreams, bright dreams ?

I I I .

Dreams, bright dreams !

Ay ! to my heart ye are simpler things :
Love is the light of your radiant wings—
Ye are the pulse of the quiet heart
Beating in slumber, new hope to impart !

Fancies, they call you ; but oh, ye are not !
Tokens are ye of a happier lot,
Visions of what the heart would be,
Yearnings for that which is pure and free,
 When the soul goes forth
 From the clogs of earth,
And its own pure thought is the light that seems
 Of dreams, bright dreams.

I V .

Dreams, sad dreams !

Visions sent on the wings of sleep,
Dark'ning the universe, where do ye steep
Your robes in blackness, that thus ye come
To throw your gloom o'er the quiet home ?
In the fount where the Night-God dips his wings ?
In the still, dark tomb of decaying things ?
Have ye some strange, mysterious power
To rise, and dart in the midnight hour,
 From the death-weeds rank
 In the church-yard dank,
Round the soul of the sleeper, your frightful beams,
 In dreams, sad dreams ?

V.

Dreams, sad dreams !

Doth night bring fear to the heart when laid
Calmly to rest in its folding shade ?
Is there a spirit of woe to bear,
A shriek of terror, a load of care ?
Do strange words mix with the light winds' sigh ?
Passeth the wizard of torment by ?
In silence and darkness doth there dwell
Some fiend, let loose from the bars of Hell,
That hovers around
In the gloom profound,
And horribly shrieks through the fitful gleams
Of dreams, sad dreams ?

VI.

Dreams, sad dreams !

Ye are no spell of a wizard hand,
Ye rise not up at a fiend's command ;
When slumber falls on a guilty breast,
Ye are the pulse of his heart's unrest.
Fancies, they call you ; but oh, ye are not !
Shadows are ye of some damning spot

In life, that haunteth the stricken soul ;
And the voices of woe that over it roll,
 As a demon rout
 Were pouring them out,
Are but the beatings within, that he deems
 Are dreams, sad dreams.

1844.

MEDITATIONS

IN THE MAMMOTH CAVE, KENTUCKY.

“ Sit mihi fas—

Pandere res alta terra et caligine mersas.”

VIR. ÆN. vi. 266-7.

By your leave, sirs, I'll talk a little about this subterranean world.

TRANSLATION.

I.

STUPENDOUS cavern ! I have read of wonders,
Of Pyramids sky-kissing, grottoes, and
Stale mummies that have overslept the thunders
Of battling armies, of time's ruthless hand
Touching them lightly : these are strange—but *thou* !
When wert thou built ? by whom ? for what ? and how ?

II.

Perhaps thou art as old as Time ;—then say,
Didst hear the stars sing, and the angels shout ?
When God said “ light,” did one bright wand'ring ray
Straggle where now I stand ? Wert thou scooped out

Before or after thou wert swinging through
Nothing's abode, as stars swing in the blue?

III.

If 'twas before, 'twould be quite interesting
To know a little more about that state
Of hotch-potch, yclept chaos; but divesting
Thoughts from my mind of *ante*-primal date,
I'll leave such inquiries to the "dark ages"
Where they belong, or for less silent sages.

IV.

If after, tell me, was thy form a freak
Of nature, and as late wiseacres say,
Did some great river (Green, perhaps,) o'erbreak
Its banks, and force through thee its thund'ring way?
Where, then, could it have possibly got out?
And where all gone to? for I stand in doubt.

V.

Well, canst thou tell? Paugh! 'twould be speculation—
Thou know'st of things above ground, less than I;
For I'm convinced, (and this is plain narration,)
Thou never saw'st the great, free, boundless sky;

What dost thou think then, of the pale-faced people
That sail thy "Styx," and stare up "Gorin's" steeple?

VI.

Have brighter beings ever sported through
Thy winding halls, and lighter voices rung?
Have fairies danced in "Cleaveland Avenue,"
Skimm'd swifter thy dark waves and sweeter sung?
Have they (I reckon not) "Mat's"* back bestrid,
And got a ducking, as your Poet did?

VII.

"O! ilia messorum!" could they eat
The grapes that cluster on thy star-lit walls?
"Non erat nasus illis," if as sweet
They deem'd their flowers as those that deck our halls.
Perhaps I am mistaken, and the hue
Supplied the place of luscious sweetness too.

VIII.

Perhaps, too, I'm mistaken in their shape,
And awful forms inhabit this abode,

* "*Mat*" and "*Steph*" are the names of the Cave guides.

Chimeras dire—fiends that have made their 'scape
 From human eye—from all but conscience' goad.—
 Say, are our fears the echoes that they fling
 Back—back on the unsullied heart's harp-string ?

IX.

Well, even I have had my feelings stirr'd,
 If not above ground, certainly in thee ;
 I've held my breath until the sound was heard
 Of rocks, our guide threw into the "Dead Sea,"
 And stared to see the lighted taper hit
 The water in the "Bottomless" dark "Pit."

X.

I've trod the "Gothic Avenue" throughout,
 Come to the "Lover's Leap," but didn't take it,
 Fill'd the whole "Chapel" with an echoing shout,
 A huge st alagmite saw, and tried to break it,
 'Tis called the "Pillar of" (his name is one
 That will not rhyme) Jove and Alcmena's son.

XI.

I've gazed into thy chamber, set with stars,
 And thought of brighter eyes I left at home ;

Have pluck'd thy gems no human polish mars,
Have sail'd thy "Styx," and look'd up every dome ;
Have drunk the water from thy sparkling fountains,
And sat down tired upon thy "Rocky Mountains."

XII.

I've quaff'd Madeira in "Queen Mary's Bower,"
And eat cold chicken—(this is quite romantic)—
Picked up in "Cleaveland Avenue" a flower—
Listen'd to doggerel that run me frantic,
Until, at length, ('twas natural, you'll say,)
My feelings found an outbreak in this way.

XIII.

Oh ! thou hast seen earth's paragons—the eye
Of starlike beauty has been lit in thee,
And forms of angel slighⁿtness have pass'd by—
Say, was thy great heart beating not to see
Creatures like these—such as have often trod
Thy "winding ways"—brows touch'd with light from
God ?

XIV.

Have such gone down in thee, and to the light—
The common smile of heaven—returned no more ?

Oh, God ! I shudder—in intensest night
 Have spirits wander'd to the far, far shore
 Of dim Eternity, and in thine awful keeping
 Are earth's most beautiful and godlike sleeping ?

X V .

'Tis said, (I think the story may be so—
 'Tis very likely, and “ Steph ” swore he did,)
 Some wanderer found a dozen years ago,
 Or more, perhaps, within this cavern hid,
 Two men, all shrivell'd—perfect Indian dummies,
 As stale and time-worn as Egyptian mummies.

X V I .

Oh, that I knew their history. Canst thou tell ?
 Say, were they friends or foes ? What is the tale
 Of their life's sufferings ? By what magic spell
 Lured, came they hither ? how grew pale
 Beneath Death's touch ?—hold, probably you knew 'em
 Not, when their hearts leap'd glad, and blood run through
 'em.

X V I I .

Why ask ?—I know those sealèd lips have press'd
 The cheek of beauty—hopes, fond hopes have beat

Within those dusky bosoms,—what's the rest

Of life ? a little mingling of the sad and sweet ;—
This they have had—what mortal hath them not ?
They died ! and now their mem'ry is forgot.

XVIII.

Oh ! for some voice whose all-pervading power

Might fill my wonderings ; can there be no sound
To break the stillness of this awful hour,

And stir the blackness of this gloom profound ?
Here on my bended knee, all eye—all ear,
I list, and pray—Spirit of Darkness, hear !

XIX.

Vain—vain ; no sound ! within these gloomy halls

God's fearful secret-keeper, silence, dwells
Unbroke, save where the dripping pebble falls,

The cascade tumbles, or the fountain wells ;
Voices that speak not—sounds that seem to make
Thy deepmost stillness deeper stillness take.

XX.

Palace that seem'st eternal—yet shall I,

Mortality's weak worm, behold thy fall,

When thrones shall crumble, men in terror fly,
And darkness spread its universal pall—
Then to the quakings of that trumpet-thunder
Shall every vaulted dome be rent asunder.

1844.

THE STORM - SPIRIT.

DWELL in the depths of the sultry air,
I sail on the hurrying cloud
O'er valleys and mountain-tops jagged and bare,
When the thunder-peal sounds loud;
And the eagle, alit on a shiver'd peak,
With an eye on the dashing spray,
When he hears the rush of my pinions sweep
Is off with a shriek—and away !

Away, away ! but I follow him there,
As through heaven's blue vault he springs,
Till I leave the conqueror stricken and bare,
With the dust on his royal wings.
He may gaze on the sun with a tireless eye,
He may sport with the torrent's foam,
But woe to his plumes when the whirlwinds fly
From the depths of their pent-up home.

I dwell in the caves of the upper deep,
And the clouds my nurslings are,
And all the night I watch o'er their sleep
By the light of some lonely star ;—
And I laugh while the beautiful skyey tent
Of the heaven is black'ning o'er,
And the dark pavilion of clouds is rent
By the thunder's sullen roar.

I summon the winds from their dungeons lone
To sweep o'er the darken'd earth,
I am hovering aye where the great trees moan
When the hurricane's tramp goes forth ;
And on the sea like a brooding fiend
I silently sit and swing,
Till lur'd by the sighs of the cavern'd wind,
Or a glance of the lightning's wing.

Then over the land, and the streams, and sea,
I sweep with my stormy train,
And loud and fierce as the wild waves be
Is the mariner's cry of pain,

As I hover awhile o'er the foundering bark,
And shiver the tott'ring mast,
And hollow the place, with my pinions dark,
Of their graves as I hurry past.

I lead the clouds on their solemn march
As back to their lair they go,
And I rear the bright triumphal arch
Of the "million-color'd bow ;"
For I steal the rays as they fall askance
From the sun through the glist'ning trees,
And each beautiful tint that is there by chance,
I catch, and I paint with these.

Oh, the dark Storm-Spirit is every where !
I bask in the torrid glow,
And I rear for the Ice-King his palace bare
Of the everlasting snow ;
And wherever the foot of man hath been
O'er the land, and streams, and sea,
And the viewless caves of the air, I ween,
Have been trod by the storm and me.

GHOSTS.

“ We are all ghosts.”

SARTOR RESARTUS.

WHEN the spirit's eyelids open,
Outward vestments fall away,
And it sees its spirit-brothers
Stalk out from their homes of clay.

Every thing is then a vision—
Every thing a pallid ghost,
Spectral shapes are onward leading
Nothing but a spectre host.

Sprites are piping faint hosannas,
Ghosts are beating phantom drums,
And, a formless banner waving,
Lo, an apparition comes !

Flitting most fantastically,
 Wreathing in a vacuous round,
Go the outlines dim and curious
 Of a substance never found.

Fruits that look'd all glorious, golden,
 Shadows have to ashes press'd ;
Phantom shapes of men are dangling
 On a passion phantom-breast.

Spectres gibber in the dimness,
 Scraping dust that looks like gold ;
Images of women follow,
 With their features wan and cold.

For not on a human shoulder,
 Skull-cramp'd, stay this spirit throng,
But through pores of earth and ocean,
 Move, a thousand million strong.

Now they flutter like a forest,
 Joy is beating his reveil ;
Comes, like silence settling after,
 SORROW's hush of plaintive wail.

Through a portal vague and vasty,
Up the shadowy concourse go,
And these strange words are the only
Pulses echoed from their flow :—

“ Mystery in mystery ending—
Little shaping into Most,
Parts for ever re-uniting
Of the one Essential Ghost !

“ There is nothing of the earthly,
Save these EIDOLA of God,
Looking out through phantom-faces,
O'er the Infinite and Broad !”

THE VOICE OF DAYS.

“ And I said, Days should speak.”

JOB xxxii. 7.

How beautiful !

Come hither, fair one, whose bright eye to me
Is like a summer landscape, and whose love
Flows like the voice of prayer. Look, how the moon
Treads the bright azure with her “ silver feet,”
And stars come out and sing, and gilded clouds
Do wave their banners, and the dark woods stir
As they were wing’d with joy !
How eloquent is beauty ! every star
That decks the brow of eve, each flower that lifts
Its meek eye up to God—each gorgeous cloud
That bathes in sunshine—every painted bird—
The rainbow’s tints—the glory, like a star,
Of woman’s beauty—every fairy hue

That hath been garner'd in the mighty soul
Of the wide world, are full of eloquence.

And they do never perish : as our years
Rise on the surge of being and are lost,
Their echoes die not. Every gentle breeze—
Each wave that leaps in light—each voice of love—
Yea, and the “audible stillness” of the night
Do force them back, and list'ning to their tones,
We heed not time, but make our lives a part
Of that we hear, and in the eloquent thoughts
Of our rapt spirits dwell.

We mete not time by years.
The blight they bring our hearts, or the calm joy,
Is our chronometer. To each bad man
Their note is but the beating of his heart,
When all its tide is lava, and the swell
Of its tumultuous heavings hurries back
O'er days of sin. The good man heeds them not ;
But every flower, and cloud, and laughing stream,
The pomp of Autumn—every passing year—
And change, and time are shadowing forth the hues
Of their own beauteous order in his heart,
And bearing him beyond the reach of years.

1843.

THERE ARE MOMENTS IN LIFE.

THERE are moments in life of most exquisite sadness,
When the leaves of the heart close around its perfume,
And alone in its triumph o'er passion and madness
It asks not—it sighs not for else save the tomb.

And 'tis not when we mourn o'er the lovely departed,
When our anguish is deepest—these moments arise,
But they wave their dark wing o'er the gay and light-hearted,
Like a cloud flitting over the sunniest skies.

As the traveller through deserts, when evening hath found him
Beside some oasis indulging in joy,
Grows sick when he hears the Bedouins surround him,
And silent waits only their time to destroy—

Thus, whenever we reach a glad spot in existence,
A spot that seems freest from sorrow and pain,
Our fears, like those Arabs, encamp in the distance,
And our hearts become silent and sadden'd again.

They come—those sad moments—when hope seems the
brightest,
To cast their dark hue o'er the lips that we love,
They steal o'er our bosoms when bounding the lightest,
And breathe “There's no joy unalloy'd but above.”

Oh, who has not bow'd 'neath their lone, lone dominion,
Till his heart lay all hush'd in his passionless breast,
And forgetful of earth he hath yearn'd for the pinion
Of a dove to convey him away to his rest!

1845.

ODE

ON THE DEATH OF ANDREW JACKSON.

I.

DEAD! do the coward and the brave

Fall then at length as low?

Is all of glory but the grave—

Its pomp, its pride, its show?

And is this he—the council star—

The thunderbolt of blacken'd war—

And hath he perish'd?—no!

His sun is gone, but left its rays,

We dwell in their immortal blaze.

II.

A pall that shadows earth and sky,

When earth and sky are brigh

A wave that quickly sparkles by

And vanishes in light,

A sphere eclipsed, a star grown dim—
We mourn the change, but not thus him,
 Who, from his lofty height,
And peerless thought by men before,
Hath died to take but one step more.

III.

Yet, man of battles, hero, say,
 Failed not thine own heart
In journeying that lonely way,
 How didst thou act thy part?
No shield—no sword—no flag—no plume—
Methinks thou couldst have met thy doom,
 Nor felt one terror start,
Had these been there, and the hurrah
Been heard in that relentless war.

IV.

Ah, no! the friends that saw thee fall,
 Saw not thy soul give way;
Chieftain! 'twas worth thy triumphs all,
 To fade in such a ray;
Laden with honor and with years,
Thou left behind thee all the tears

Shed on thy setting day,
While gladly to their place of rest,
Thy weary footsteps onward press'd.

V.

A shade hath settled on thy lips,
Nor on thy lips alone ;
Each star is veiled in dim eclipse
That on our banner shone.
Dead ! hear ye not that fearful sound ?
'Twill echo Freedom's area round,
And murmur 'neath the throne
Of her, who sits the " Ocean Queen,"
To wake her once-mock'd empire-dream.

VI.

Who comes to gaze upon that face,
That smile once more to greet ?
What ! no warm pressure—no embrace—
Is it thus heroes meet ?
'Tis he from yonder sister star
That shines above the wreck of war,
In virgin brightness sweet ;

Giv'st him no words of praise to keep ?
Too late ! brave Texan, turn and weep.

VII.

Go plunge into the battle strife,
In peace adorn thy name,
If yet thy little space of life
May yield thee such a fame.
Where is the hero, of what age,
Who such a boundless heritage
Of glory e'er could claim ?
Call up earth's mighty dead, and say
Ere thou departest—who are they ?

VIII.

Not thou, who from a Northern home
Thy ruthless pathway trod
In vengeance to Eternal Rome,
The appointed "Scourge of God,"
Vain compare ! though thy vassals bring
The crowns of many a captur'd king,
And hurl them on the sod ;
Or, as thou bad'st, Busentius turn,
To form thy everlasting urn.

IX.

Not thou, destroyer, infidel

In all save thine own lust,—

Thou knewest not how deep a hell

Yearn'd for its loathsome trust.

Thou deem'dst not in thy peerless height,

Thy star could set in such a night,

Till wriggling in the dust,

Thou saw'st good Brutus standing o'er,

Thy friend no less—his country's more.

X.

Nor thou, Gaul's glory and her shame,

The mighty and the mean,

Could e'en Marengo's blaze of fame

Light up thy closing scene ?

Mumbling thy prison bars, to guess

'Twere vain, how in thy wretchedness,

Did all thy glory seem—

Man-mountain ! cast into life's flood

To turn its peaceful waves to blood.

XI.

In vain—turn thou to Freedom's land,

Earth's noble dwell not here

Where despots wield a flaming brand
O'er slaves that crouch and fear ;
Turn thou to gaze upon *one* gem
That glitters in our diadem,
As stainless as 'tis dear ;
Worth all the gems that e'er have shone ;
Till Jackson's death, that blazed alone !

XII.

Raise then no pile—he long'd to rest
'Neath Freedom's hallow'd sod,
His dust—here in the glorious West,
We leave it with its God.
Let his eternal column be
The smile that lingers round the Free,
Their area bright and broad ;
He living spurn'd the tomb of kings—
Why mock his memory with such things ?

XIII.

Pause now—that name will ever be
A thunderbolt to thrones,
That kings their littleness may see
Who build on human bones,

Who trample into glorious birth
The slumbering heroes of the earth,
That knelt in sighs and groans,
Nor deem'd before how weak are they,
The "Pagod-things" that men obey.

XIV.

'Twill live the wonder of each age,
Not as earth's great have done,
A Christian, hero, or a sage,
But as these all in one ;
And coming years will love to blend
In union until time shall end
Jackson and Washington ;
While in the senseless clay they rot,
Shall stupid tyrants be forgot.

1845.

TIME.

The Desolater desolate !
The Victor overthrown !

BYRON.

Oh, mighty, tri-crown'd King !
Where are the limits of thy vast domain ?
Ages that seem'd eternal in their spring
Lie buried 'neath thy reign.

Kingdoms that proudly stood,
And look'd defiance in thine iron brow ;
Sages that counsel'd nations, and the good
Alike, where are they now ?

Hearts that beat high with life,
And bards that rous'd them by their words of flame,
Warriors that shrunk not from the battle strife,
When red destruction came—

Swept by thy rushing hand
To infinite oblivion—not a trace
E'en of their ruin hast thou suffer'd stand
To mark that ruin's place.

Gone is Assyria's pride,
Mock'd are the dreamings of the old Chaldee,
And Greece that startled nations when she died,
A corpse of glory—see !

What countless thousands fell
When stoop'd the lightning of the Roman sword !
But Roman valor that wast erst a spell,
Is a forgotten word.

Over all kings proud King !
Where are the limits of thy vast domain ?
The Past is thine—though from its ashes spring
A Phœnix o'er thy reign.

Thine is the Present—thou
Wavest thy sceptre and the mortal flow,
Backward, with paleness on each vanquish'd brow,
Through thy dim portals go.

The Commonwealths that stand
Upon the ruins of departed thrones
Shook to their centre by thy mighty hand,
Startle kings' sleeping bones.

And as thy years wax old,
Shall new Republics struggle into birth,
But thou shalt set thy foot upon the mould
Of all that spring of earth.

Oh, mighty, tri-crown'd King !
Is there no limit to thy vast domain ?
Dethronèd one ! I see thy victims spring
To quickening life again !

Empyreal and pure,
O'er thy forgotten splendor burns a throne,
While circling round it, ages that endure
Make thy lost ones their own.

And to each human soul
Thy being cradled in his pulse's beat,
Whene'er its solemn measures cease to roll
That great reward shall meet—

If it hath nobly stood,
And battled for the truth, nor mourn'd thy sway,
Lived for great purposes, and firmly good
 Waited the perfect day.

Up, up to duty then !
Enduring patience-work will soon be o'er,
And stricken from the fellowship of men,
 Time is, for us, no more.

1845.

SEEK FLOWERS.

“ Spring doth all she can, I trow ;
She brings the bright hours,
She weaves the sweet flowers,
She dresseth her bowers,
For all below.”

BARRY CORNWALL.

SEEK flowers. I know that the Violet's eye
Is peeping out at this clear blue sky,
I know that the Hyacinth's holding up
In maidenly sheen, its blue-lipp'd cup,
I know that on yonder water's brink
The wild Anemonè stoops to drink ;
They have waited the coming of Spring's glad hours,
And I know they are here.—Seek flowers, seek flowers.

Seek flowers,—for I hear the South-wind's shout
Calling his beautiful sweethearts out ;

“Jove!” how they blush when he bends to sip
The love that lies on their velvet lip ;
All day he lingers and bathes his wings
In the balm of these radiant, sinless things,
And at eve, like the hush of the blessed God,
Sings them to rest on the quiet sod.

Dwellers fair in each greenwood glen,
Bringing delight to the children of men,
I love to think how the maid will twine
Your radiance bright in her hair’s sunshine,
Of the joy that will thrill the dear young child
When he catches your forms in the meadow wild,
How the aged that bend ’neath affliction’s rod
Will smile upon you and bless their God.

Early visitants—fresh spring flowers,
Ye bring the promise, in brighter hours,
That the fragrant Orchis and flaunting Rose
Will tarry with us to the summer’s close,
That the Aster will come, when days grow brief,
To throw its smile o’er the fallen leaf,
That when airs grow keen, by the frozen rill
Some bolder trembler will linger still.

Girl of my heart ! would you know a gift
That will ever my fainting spirits lift ?
(It may be weakness, but list, thou shalt hear,
I have never spoke false to thy earnest ear,)
Bind me a wreath where thy love shall lie
With the fragrance, after its splendors die,—
There is no gift of the seasons' hours
That touches my heart like the gift of flowers.

1845.

I WOULD NOT LEARN FORGETFULNESS.

“The Past! ah, we owe it a tenderer debt,
Heaven’s own sweetest mercy is not to forget.”

MISS LONDON.

I WOULD not learn forgetfulness ; the Past too bright
hath been,
For me to throw oblivion’s pall on every vanish’d scene :
The bright, blue face of heaven, the breeze that used to
play,
With its unseen fingers in my hair, through all the live-
long day,
The glad and blessed sunshine that seemed the smile of
God,
And the flowers that sat like diamonds around the path I
trod,
The fair-eyed dawn, the glowing day, the sunlit clouds
of even,
That hung like wings of angels o’er the battlements of
heaven—

I would not learn forgetfulness ; I would rather learn
the art
Of binding all these golden links more closely round my
heart !

I would not learn forgetfulness ; though I've sunder'd
many a tie,
I could not bear to lose sweet friends that only droop and
die ;

Our family chain hath perish'd ! but it seems not thus
to me,

For the world but count the *living* links, and they are
only *three* ;

The rest they say are gone, but I think they're with me
still,

Their voice is in the summer breeze, and in the tink-
ling rill,

In the mellow hush of evening—in the solemn hour of
night,

They seem to hover o'er me all radiant and bright,
And whether they are here or not, I do not—do not know,
But I would not learn forgetfulness ; for mem'ry makes
it so.

I would not learn forgetfulness ; oh, I could not bear
my lot,

If the woof the Past has woven should be broken and
forgot,

If o'er the paths of manhood where I daily trudge along,
Some dear remembrance did not rise and wake my heart
to song,

If when the star-eyed flow'rets spring up around my way,
I did not sometimes think of *one* as beautiful as they,

If when the skies bend o'er me with such a mellow hue,
I did not gaze into an eye of just as sweet a blue,

Let those whose hearts are withered sing, " Oh, teach me
to forget !"

My life hath been too golden, I cannot sing thus yet.

I would not learn forgetfulness ; the spell that mem'ry
flings

Across my heart is like the sweep of angels' silken
wings ;

'Tis of summer clouds and sunshine—of the songsters
and the breeze,

Of the silver moon and starlight—of the blue wave lit by
these ;

'Tis of a gentle maiden in her beauty and her pride,
That like a guardian angel sits ever by my side,—
I never tasted sorrow—let those who have complain,
I would gladly number over those halcyon days again ;
I would not learn forgetfulness ; I would rather learn
the art
Of binding all these golden links more closely round my
heart.

1844.

LINES WRITTEN IN A STORM.

BID thy destroying angel pass,
We crouch beneath its wing of fear,
Let thy avenging thunders, God !
Stoop harmless round thy children dear.

We are an humble family band,
We have no lofty hope or aim,
We are content, although our praise
May never fill the ear of fame.

We cannot tell Thee all we have—
The blessings each new moment brings ;
Health, or if sickness come, thy dove
Sent down with healing on his wings.

Wealth, not such as the world would call,
We are not rich in gold or soil,
But we have hearts *to work*, and Thou
Dost smile upon our humble toil.

Friends, our full hearts may never say
 What garner'd stores of love they hold ;
 Thou hast not doom'd them yet to bear
 The treach'ry of the false and cold.

Hopes, Father, Thou dost know all these,
 For we have hung them on thy heart,—
 Regard from all the good and wise,
 And tremblings for “the better part.”

Bid thy destroying angel pass,
 Let thy white wing descend and keep
 Its shadow close around our store—
 Guard us, Almighty ! while we sleep.

Oh sweet-soul'd God ! one spirit star
 Hath issued from thy radiant breast,
 And from her dreamful throne, the moon
 With mildest glory floods the west !

The whirlwinds trail their banners home,—
 Smile out all heaven's fair company—
 Lie down ; ye see the morrow morn
 Who dwell beneath this roof with me !

TO A STAR.

FAIR wanderer, that through yonder blue
Thy silent course for aye hast trod,
Thou'rt kindling now, as thy first hue
Fell burning from the hand of God.

Undimm'd—unwasted—though thy race
With earth's primeval course began ;
Time blots thee not from Heaven's face,—
Fond watcher o'er the hopes of man.

Still the same look thy coming wears
To the young child that drinks thy light,
And to the sire whose rev'rend hairs
Thou tingest with a softer white.

Fair orb, what diff'rent eyes will be
Turn'd on thy face ere morning's dawn !
What joys, what sorrows wilt thou see,
What bursting hopes—what pleasures gone !

He, as the sage of Chaldea's lore,
Who reads thy bright page as a book,
This night, to add to learning's store,
Will bend on thee an earnest look.

He, who beholds thee as the eye
Of her on whom his love is flung,
Will call up tender scenes gone by,
And words that to his heart have clung.

The watcher by the bed of pain
Will sadly view thy kindling fire,
And turn, and turn his gaze again,
Glad when thy trembling beams expire.

And there will be who lift the eye
Of warm devotion unto thee,
And muse some simple song as I,
To lure the heart from misery.

Or, in your brightness as you tread,
Alike through calm and storm, your way,
Will feel strong hopes around him shed,
And bend him on his knees, and pray,

Almighty Father ! as yon star
Be this vain life in thy command,
Oh ! keep it safe 'mid passion's war,
To blaze at last in thy right hand.

1844.

SONNET. — DESPONDENCY.

I FEEL a weariness of mortal life—

A shaking, almost, of my trust in God ;

Is this the harvest of my years of strife,

To keep from dying what I've cast abroad ?

If I have err'd when that I deem'd was given

To me a message from on high to speak,

Or if the thoughts that in my breast have striven,

Have been trick'd out in language all too weak,

I know not. Merciful God ! my offspring lie

Poison'd with venom from the snakes that crawl

Around their path, while, as the pelican, I

Revive with heart-blood, and sustain them all ;

And I am weary in my youth of years,

Of struggling ever against doubts and fears.

SONNET.—FAITH.

My senses never lie amort in sleep,
But then my soul builds up an image fair,
Round which the wings of Seraphim that sweep,
Make voiceful symphonies of the ambient air ;
And like a wond'rous bark indu'd with mind,
It floats in glory o'er the effulgent tides,
And spurning as Phæacian ships the wind,
Right onward to its blissful haven glides.
And so I know this is my bark of FAITH,
Seeking the anchorage of God's calm heart,
Convoy'd by angels, watchful of its freight,
And gliding safely to the heavenly mart.
Thus while "Death's brother" holds my clay below,
My soul doth to its better portion go.

N I G H T .

SEND down thy milder presence, God !

Let dreamy silence wrap our earth,
And brightly o'er the fainting sod,
Oh, bid thy glorious Night go forth !

How beautiful ! Heaven's golden door
Stands open—in their jewell'd crown,
Treading yon blue Empyrean's floor,
The company of stars look down.

A gauze-like veil yon hills enfold,
Spangled with rainbow atoms—all
Seems like some glorious tale of old,
That comes at Memory's pensive call.

Caressingly the wings of Sleep
Float through the liquid stillness round ;
A sense of soothing, blessed, deep,
Distils o'er all the weary ground.

The wood-bird, in his little nest,
Feels the soft presence on his wings,
And hearts that sighed for heaven and rest
In dreams enjoy these fancied things.

Well hast thou come to eyes like mine,
That fail with wakefulness and tears,
Well do thy chasten'd beauties shine
Upon my manhood's sterner years.

I thank thee, Father, for thy Night,
But deeper thanks I give for Death,
That lays its seal on mortal sight,
Nor wakes to pain with waking breath.

For soon, too soon, Imperial Queen,
Wilt thou have trod thy sapphire way,
And in the east a glimmering beam
Will tremble on the brow of day.

Thy fires will fade in deeper light,
Earth's madd'ning voices break again
The silver stillness, that, all night,
Hung like a robe o'er hill and plain.

F A M E .

I HAVE read of a lonely castle—

A castle that stands by the sea ;
Where the waves that beat at its rugged feet
Do mutter dismally.

I have read of a beauteous maiden
That looks from that castle wall,
With an eye of star-like brightness,
And a figure slight and tall.

And the morning sun now beameth
On the castle and the wave,
And she utters a voice that lureth
The souls of the high and brave.

One youth, with silken ringlets,
Is striving up the steep,—
God shield thee ! boy, 'tis a noble prize,
And the wave below is deep.

He has bow'd to the fairy maiden,
He has touch'd that lily hand,
And the crowd below are gazing up
Where in close embrace they stand.

The moonbeams now are flaunting
The walls of that castle gray,
And a solemn train sweeps through it,
And the Fathers kneel and pray.

Then I thought of another castle
That standeth full high to see,
Where the waters of Life around its base
Go surging solemnly.

And a fairy maiden is sitting there,
With an eye on the rushing main,
And she utters a voice that lureth
The souls of the brave to FAME.

They strive when the morning beameth,
And they list her siren call,
Nor think of the fee she claimeth
Of the solemn tread and pall.

The day on the castle sleepeth,
The fairy hath pass'd away ;
There is nothing there but the rugged walls,
And a train that kneel and pray.

1844.

ROOM! ROOM!

“ The Editor of the Baltimore Clipper, in reply to a correspondent, using the signature “ Posterity,” says, ‘ We make room for Posterity.’ ”

U. S. GAZETTE.

Room in the lighted palace,
Room at the festal board ;
Pass round the brimming chalice,
Let the wine be quickly pour'd ;
Room where bright eyes are meeting,
Where silvery-white arms glance,
Room where fair forms go fleeting
Through the mazes of the dance.

Room in the halls of glory,
Where the plume and bonnet wave ;
Room on the page of story,
For the noble and the brave ;

Room on the field of battle,
 'Mid the clarion's mighty swell,
And the drum's triumphant rattle,
 And the victor's madd'ning yell.

“Room at the bridal altar,”
 Breathe quick the solemn vow,
For the love-lip soon will falter,
 And a shadow cloud the brow;
“Room at thy hearth, oh, Mother!”
 Room at thy place of prayer,”
Comes to thy heart another,
 Room for the trembler there.

Room in each human dwelling—
 White heads drop round you—see!
Why stand ye thus a-knelling?
 Turn—turn yourselves, and flee.
Ho! Ho! with mirth and laughter,
 Swell on the young and brave,
Room—(for they'll crowd in after)—
 Room in the vasty grave.

Room on the lonely mountain,
Room through the mighty earth ;
Life's tide from every fountain
Is swelling into birth,
Crowd on, ye pallid faces—
Crowd onward to the tomb !
Your offspring claim your places,
Make room for them ! make room !

1842.

ANGELS' VISITS.

THERE are moments in life when the heart-strings awaken
To pulses of music, as soft and as light
As the exquisite tones by the summer wind shaken
From the leaves of the rose, ere it closes at night.

THERE are times when each idol God e'er brake before us
Takes its seat in the soul, and is worshipp'd again,
Till we deem even yet, in the joy that steals o'er us,
Their warm kisses lie on our lips like a flame.

FOR He took them away that their radiant whiteness
No deeper earth-stain than those kisses should know ;
And He lets them come back with His music and bright-
ness,
To lure us away from this dark world of woe.

They fill up our silence—they hover around us—

They walk and they watch at our side as before,
By every old haunt where our infancy found us,
By every pure fountain we drank from of yore.

They breathe o'er our spirits those ravishing numbers,
Till our hearts become weary of meaningless mirth,
And we long to drop off our earth-garment that cumbers,
And flee where the source of such music has birth.

Who—who with a soul in his bosom engrafted,
Hath ne'er felt its chords touch'd by spirits from bliss,
Till with the sweet sense of the sound he was wafted
Afar from a world so cold-hearted as this !

1846.

FAYRIE-LAND.

YE have heard of a region fair and broad,
Where the seasons know not decay,
Where the snow-drop sits on its own sweet sod
Beside the orchis and golden-rod,
And the white rose blooms alway.

YE have heard it said, to the spirit's ear,
There are passionate tones that call
The dreamer back to that strange, bright sphere,
In whose bowers, from rose-scents far and near,
Most ravishing numbers fall.

For those flowers, if dreaming bards say true,
Not only are fair to see,
But every one in its own bright hue
Gives out its portion of music too,
Unsyllabled though it be.

What mortals have called the asphodel,
Singeth there a dirge, they ween,
O'er the lov'd that down in the still grave dwell,
And changes are rung on the wind-flower's bell,
By the swaying of hands unseen.

The violet too, in those blessed bowers,
Tinkles its purple leaves,
And the hyacinth, wet with the kiss of showers,
Sits tremblingly there 'mid its sister flowers,
And its exquisite music weaves.

And passing sweet to the human heart
Is the mystic sense they bear,
Of love, and of hope that shall ne'er depart,
And of joy that the channels of pleasure start
In the soul that is lingering there.

But know ye aught of that pleasant shore,—
Doth it lie beyond the sun ?
Oh ! let us seek it and weep no more—
Let us press to our bosom a hoarded store
Of those sweet flowers every one.

That land lieth not where the lote-tree throws
Its balm o'er our dying part ;
It is in the sunshine that each one knows,
It is where the whisper of kindness blows
O'er the flowers in a quiet heart.

There is not another Fayrie-Land,
Save the land of Love and Youth ;—
Flowers tinkle alone in *one* fair, dear hand ;
They mourn alone where *one* bosom bland
Hath sunk to its sleep in truth.

1846.

THE VOLUNTEERS' RETURN.

The remains of Capt. W. B. Allen, and five other Volunteers who fell at Monterey, Mexico, were borne through the streets of the city of Nashville, accompanied by a long train of soldiers and citizens.

WE welcom'd them not with the glorious sound
Of the drums, in a thunderous rolling,
But our footsteps fell silent and slow on the ground,
And the death-bell was solemnly tolling.

Yet proud was our sorrow, we blush'd not with shame,
For we knew that no ill could betide them;
And our hearts almost wished, as we thought of their fame,
That we lay in their glory beside them.

We thought how they press'd in the heat of the strife,
Where the fire-wind was crisping the banners,
And how little they reck'd of their own gallant life,
So they died 'mid their comrades' hosannas.

We bore them in sadness—yet bright though our tears,
Like a rainbow our triumph was beaming ;
And we felt for the future no anguish or fears,
Where the tempest of battle is streaming.

And we knew in the heart of the country they lov'd
How the fame they have won would be cherish'd ;
And that ne'er she would think, with a spirit unmov'd,
Of her sons who so nobly have perish'd.

1847.

THE YOUNG MOON ON THE SKY HAS FLUNG.

THE young moon on the sky has flung
Her skirt of silver hue,
So faint a beam,
I almost deem
'Twill melt back in the blue ;
And thick stars weave a mazy tune,
As on that blessed night,
When dreaming o' the love aboon,
We murmur'd our troth-plight, sweet girl,
We murmur'd our troth-plight.

And, dear, dear heart ! I'm linking now,
Beneath this twilight sky,
A pleasant rhyme
For that sweet time
Of hope, when you and I

Vow'd wildly, till we join'd the dead,
That, hand in hand along,
Our footsteps should together tread
The dear old land of song, sweet love,
The dear, dear land of song.

Ah! mind you, how, when Fate denied
So blest a boon as this,
We gave in tears
The hopes of years,
And seal'd them with a kiss ?
One last, last word of past delight,
As I hung on thy breast,
One of desire we breath'd that night,
And left to Heaven the rest, dear girl,
And left to Heaven the rest.

Oh, love of youth ! oh, love of soul !
How short its moments seem,
And yet we feel
Their gladness steal
Through all life's after dream.

Time has no power o'er scenes like these,
They will not be forgot ;
The heart has silent memories
The lip doth utter not, dear girl,
The lip doth utter not.

And long, long years have pass'd since then,
Nor care I how they flee,
So they contain
The short'ning chain
That draws me back to thee :
For we shall meet once more, and oh !
In that bright world of bliss,
The clouds shall never come, that throw
Their shadows over this, dear love,
Their shadows over this.

GOD SEEN FROM THE ROCK.

“ And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock ; and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by.”

Exodus xxxiii. 22.

WHEN the old Seer who led the train

Of Israel to their promis'd rest,

From Sinai's secret commune came,

Its glow still burning in his breast,

God check'd his idle words, nor gave

His servant what he madly sought,

But hid him in a living grave,

Till pass'd what to behold he thought.

Where Horeb, by the rod's stern shock,

Was cleft for Israel's fainting band,

Jehovah placed him ;—and the rock

He cover'd with his awful hand.

Flam'd the unveilèd Brightness by,
Kindled the mountain to its core,
No living thing might see, nor die,
What heaven and earth shall flee before.

He took away his hand—the Seer
Look'd after—goodness, peace and love,
Like rainbows spanning forms of fear,
Shone on his robes below, above.

Our earth is but a cleft where God
Doth hide His children by His hand,
Till His majestic steps have trod
The circuit of His empire grand.

We but look *after* on the clouds
That roll their dust around His path,
In tenderest radiance He enshrouds
His attributes of fear and wrath.

His mild-eyed mercy, and His grace,
Are all the glimpses He may give ;—
The splendor of His Sov'reign Face
We could not look upon, and live.

I NEVER AM SAD.

I NEVER am sad—at the early dawn
My spirit is up with the lark away,
And it stretches its tireless pinions on
To bathe in the light of an endless day.
The spirit that opens the folded flowers,
And dances along with the laughing hours,
That flingeth the incense of morn around,
And drinks up the dew from the fragrant ground,
That sheds a rich balm o'er earth, and through air,
And filleth Creation every where,
Is near me—I float on its silvery wings
Away, away amid vision'd things !
And voices are round me,—they bid me be glad ;
Oh ! I never am sad ! I never am sad !

I never am sad—when the noonday sun
Rolls through the firmament torrid and bare,

And the insects awake with their drowsy hum,
And float like a pest in the still, deep air,
When I hardly can hear the waters trill,
And the shadows lie sleeping on valley and hill,
Then the spirit that watches the gath'ring cloud,
And laughs as he wreathes its misty shroud,
That mixes always in the tempest's roar,
When the thunder is tramping the mountain o'er—
Leads forth his train;—on the rattling blast
I can hear him rushing free and fast,
Though I bow in fear, yet my heart is glad,—
Oh, I never am sad ! I never am sad !

I never am sad—at the starlight hour
That follows the lapse of a golden day,
When unseen beings exert their power,
And call in my wandering thoughts to pray ;
When all but the voices of Night are still,
And the wind scarce sighs o'er the lonely hill,
When the spirit of slumber descends on all,
Save the fairies that trip through the elfin hall,
And beauty that whirled in the mazy dance,
Lies softly dreaming of young Romance—

Those beings glide by as I bend my knee,
And they whisper their soothing words to me—
They bid me rejoice, and their tones are glad ;
Oh, I never am sad ! I never am sad !

1842.

ALL ABOUT LOVE.

PLAGUE take the sex ! I've tried my best
To put love under ban,
There's one girl haunts my fancy still
Do every thing I can,
And then to court her—why, 'twere death
To such a modest man !

There are so many mortal ways
To move a woman's will,
That hang me, if I hardly know
Which shows the greatest skill ;
And, having tried them all, to fail
Is quite a bitter pill.

First then, there's throwing all the soul
Upon the "weaker part,"
And getting fool'd, and blubbering

About a broken heart,—
But a fellow never tries this way,
If he is very smart.

Men oftener ply the female heart
With stuff to suit the times,
Some madcap fellows try to melt
Its bars with burning rhymes,
But far the greater portion grease
Its locks with "oil of dimes."

But if you're not a Poet, nor
In cash or credit strong,
And feel a tender care to know
How your case will come on,—
"I leave you here a little book
For you to look upon."

You'll walk out on a moonlight night,
In summer or in spring,
Get "out of soap," and may be ask
Your lady-love to sing,
And if you are a verdant youth,
You'll hint about a ring.

And if she gently lets you put
 It on her finger fair,
You'll clasp her hand, and vainly think
 Your heart is in her care ;
The next time that you meet, your ring
 Will be—the Lord knows where !

She knew you loved her as a friend,
 It never cross'd her mind
You had intentions of the sort,—
 She hopes you'll treat her kind,—
And so you'll walk off very like
 A man that "goes it blind."

Your first love over, next you'll look
 For the "substantial charms,"
You'll dream of "house and lot" at home
 And Mississippi farms,
And seek the golden heir of these
 To clasp within your arms.

You'll gobble down her senseless talk,
 And swear 'tis wondrous fine,
You'll gaze upon her freckled face,

And call its tints divine,—
Till, after having popp'd the word,
You'll find out you "can shine."

And then you'll go with burning soul,
To ask her stiff Papa,
He's willing, but he thinks her cash
Should be secured by law ;—
You'll make no answer—but you'll feel
Quite sick about the crawl.

You'll flirt last with some widow in
Her second "coming out,"
Who'll keep you as to all her past
In most delicious doubt,
Nor be so vulgar as to let
Her children run about.

You'll almost fall into the net,
But as you go away,
The world will hint, perhaps you'll have
Her husband's debts to pay,
That John and Jim will plague their "Pa"
Upon the wedding day.

You'll go into your room alone,
And think of this and that,
And wonder how it all will suit
A purse by no means "*fat*,"
Till, last, you'll think, you will not nurse
Somebody else's brat.

And then, like a philosopher,
You'll calmly quit the strife,
You'll call the girls "sour grapes," and curse
The very name of wife,
And crawl into your frozen bed,
A bachelor for life!

TWILIGHT.

God's boundless sky hath stretch'd too far,
This weary day, beyond my gaze;
This is the hour to muse—no star
Hath kindled o'er yon dusky haze,
That seems a nearer Heaven, whose hue
Looks tenderer than Day's searching blue.

How calm the scene—yon waters lie
All tranquil in their painted sleep,
The young woods lean their hearts more nigh
The beauty of the glassy deep,
And whisper to the reeds below
The dreams of love that haunt them so.

It is not Day—it is not Night—
'Tis something lovelier far than all;
When weird winds weave a tune more light,
And flower-scents tinkle as they fall,

And eyes unnumber'd wildly glance
Through air, like gleams of young Romance.

The wood-bird wakes and starts to see
Their witch-work sparkles on his wings,
And turns and turns suspiciously
As if he deem'd them harmful things,—
Then folds him in his little nest
And nods upon his glittering breast.

The angel, that unbars the gate
Of night, stands wondering on yon hill,
Nor lets the burning stars, that wait
His bidding, march the skies until
His soul hath drunk the sound and sight
Of Earth and Heaven's sweet troth-plight.

Oh ! when among the sons of men,
My soul grows weary of their strife,
How, at such times, I yield me then,
To dreams of purer, holier life ;—
Of life, with kindlier promise blent,
In mingled love and duty spent.

And ever, at this hour, there seems

One gentle form to sit by me—

'The girl of all this wild heart's dreams,

Its 'Time, and its Eternity ;

And kindly as God's twilight skies

She woos me with her thoughtful eyes.

1846.

THE SILENT MINISTRY.

MANIFOLD is God's Evangel,
But its mightiest forms are dumb,
And full oft some silent angel
Preacheth where no words do come.

In the night-time, wild and lonely,
When the wings of darkness fall,
And the heart of sweet stars only
Palpitate on Heaven's wall ;—

When, together vaguely moulded
Seem the sky, the sea, the ground,
And the white day lies enfolded,
Like a lady in a swoond,—

Then my trembling heart that waketh,
Nestles 'neath the wing of Fear,
Till a still small whisper breaketh
Softly on my spirit's ear.

Though I know not all the meaning
Of the mystic sense it bears,
Yet a hope that is not seeming
Lights the dark edge of my prayers.

And a thought, like that I cherish'd
For a being in my youth,
Fills me, as, before she perish'd,
It had fill'd me with its truth.

And each form I knew of brightness,
Robes of sovran lustre wears,
Till my spirit, in its lightness,
Climbs up to them on its prayers.

Though their dumbness seems unbroken,
Still that spirit sees and hears,
Nor requires the outward token,
Nor in future doubts or fears.

Blooms my past life on my present,
With the beauteousness it wore,
As on dry banks, bloom the pleasant
Flowers, that angel wings fan o'er.

Whether thus my human brothers
In the God-word find a faith
I know not ;—the hush of others
To *my* heart such marvel saith.

So *my* Faith is inner hearing
Of the voices mute to sense,
From Earth's lost ones re-appearing
In "the great God-light" intense.

I respect the living Preacher,
Uttering Heaven-words to his kind,
But my heart finds meetest Teacher
When the sense is left behind.

Then I see the truth more clearly,
And His secret things grow plain,
Which, when sense-regarded, nearly
Drive me back to doubts again.

For the actual of the Earnest
Makes sweet captive of the curse,
“Dust thou art, to dust returnest,”
Which the sense doth aye rehearse.

And the darkness rended deeply,
Shows in pure Evangel light
Forms, adown the Heaven, steeply
Floating in their robes of white.

With the Incarne I am walking,
Where the Faith-step oft hath trod,
On the Mount of Vision, talking
With the Silences of God.

1846.

DEATH OF ALLEN.*

THE soldier lay near Monterey
Between the dark and light,—
And the smile that lit his youthful brow,
Illumin'd the Land of Night;
For he saw in his sleep the squadrons sweep
Through the rush of the morrow's fight.

He snatch'd from its sheath his bright, blue blade,
When the drum first tapp'd Reveil,
And he saw the city a league away
In the dawn light dim and pale,
And the flags borne on by the marsh'ling hosts,
Like clouds in a driving gale.

* Capt. W. B. Allen, of Lawrence county, Tenn., who was killed at Monterey, Mexico, Sept. 22d, 1846.

He saw them marching slowly down
The hill, and his soul could feel
A thrill of awe at those moving forms,
And those ranks of bristling steel,—
“Oh, fear of death ! should a man,” he said,
“With girlish faintness reel ?”

And then, in a martial tone, he spake,
“Brave comrades, charge the foe !”—
Good Heaven ! it was a glorious sight,
To see those plumes stoop low,
And the serried men with fear again
Back in their fortress go.

Rode by his General on a steed
That snuff'd the fight afar,
And swallow'd the ground at each furious bound,
And said mid the trumps, “ha ! ha !”
While the field, all round his reeking path,
Blush'd like Aceldama.

Out spake “Old Rough and Ready” then,
“Burst on them through the wall,”—
'Twas answer'd by a deaf'ning roar,

And the thundering cannon ball,
And a crash, as when a thousand oaks
In a lonely forest fall.

Then he heard a mighty shout go up,
Like the voice of myriad waves,
“Ho! Mexique soldiers, fill the breach,
Or be forever slaves,”—
And the death-wind, like a tempest-blast,
Tore the banners off their staves.

But the hurricane rush'd on amain,
They fled like driven leaves,
While fort and tower fell crumbling down,
As when an earthquake heaves,
And the men that guarded them were “swept
Like icicles” from their caves.

Yet still, at the head of his men, he led
Their steps where a foe might seem,
And his crimson sword in the seething smoke
Flam'd like a lightning gleam;—
Till, anon, a thunderous roll of drums
Shook the battle of his dream.

A shout ! and the dreamer knew full well
 'Twas the children of the Free,
That were hurling their cry through the shatter'd sky
 To the God of victory—
And his soul had well-nigh burst its chain
 In its triumphant glee.

A change swept over the sleeper's brow ;—
 He ween'd not of space between
The battle-field and his pleasant home,—
 The Gulf and the mighty stream,
And thousands of miles had all been pass'd
 In the whirlwind of his dream.

'The homestead smil'd in the pleasant light,
 Of a sweet September morn,
He could hear the crush of the reapers' hands
 Amid the golden corn,—
"Be still ; distracting thoughts," he cried,
 "Of war's mad folly born."

His parents stood at the open door,
 Their words were few and meek,
He tried to tell of the glorious fight,

But his lips refused to speak !
And now, like a burning seal, they lay
Upon his sister's cheek.

Oh, wealth of Love ! what charm hath Fame,
That men make mock of thee ?
He would not have given that moment's joy
For a tenfold victory,—
But hark ! young soldier, the spell is broke,
'Tis the drum beats Reveillè.

He woke—historic page will tell
What glorious deeds were done,—
But woe for the dreamer ! he hath no part
Beneath the golden sun ;
Oh ! weep for that brave young friend of ours,
Who a soldier's grave hath won.

1846.

THE LONE INDIAN.

A SHADE had pass'd o'er the bright, broad sun
Ere he clomb to his mid-day height,
And alway through vapors his fire-plumes swum,
And staring comets came out, and run
Through the frighten'd heavens at night.

Each portent the Indian seers had read,
When the winds and the waves were whist,
They saw but the tokens of woe and dread,
And they sigh'd for the peaceful hunting-grounds spread
'Yond the margin daylight kiss'd.

No longer the War-God waked the proud
To battle for victory,
But the boom of the cannon long and loud,
Like Manitou's voice in the thunder cloud,
Had bidden the Red-tribe flee.

And one by one they had stole away,
Till there only was left a score—
Of weak, wan women, and fathers gray,
A chieftain that guarded their rights away,
And his beautiful child of four.

There was nothing on Earth he lov'd but her,
She was fair as the summer dawn,
And his heart was a silent worshipper
To the music made by the young leaves' stir,
That she press'd like the springing fawn.

'Twas the noontime heat—and she came and laid
Her cheek on his dusky breast,
And strange and wild were the words she said,
While the fever-dream on her spirit prey'd,
Of the land where the wearied rest.

His heart broke fast while the Powwah tried
His charms on the sufferer's brain,
For he needs must think how her mother died
Just so in the "golden eventide,"
And he knew his skill was vain.

A year pass'd on—and the white men spread
 Their crops o'er his buried child,—
And the good old Powwah too was dead,
And the others had left him all and fled
 To a home in the distant wild.

He sought for his dear old haunts in vain,—
 They had slunk from his foes' dread eye,
He saw but their harvests of golden grain
Go blushing over the groaning wain,
 And their homes in the sunset lie.

“There is naught for the red-man here to love,
 “There is naught loves him,” sighed he,
“He has no friend left but the Friend above,
“And his heart lies dead with his smitten dove,
 “Must he turn from her grave and flee?”

I know not whether his spirit heard
 A voice from the cold, cold rime,
But a pleasant change o'er his features stirr'd,
Like the smile that is waked by the first sweet bird,
 In the beautiful vernal time.

And, by those who remember the deed, 'tis said,
That after the set of day,
He open'd the grave where his child was laid,
And tearfully bore in his arms the maid
To a wild-wood far away.

1846.

THE MONTAUK'S VOW.

“That way,” said a friend who was urging me to go, “lies East Hampton, and there, stretching far out into the sea, is old Montauk, washed by the waves of unknown ages, and pointing century after century its taper fingers into the mighty Ocean. Here is the resting-place of the great nation that faded like snow-wreaths from the Island. Four miles east of Sag Harbor, near the road, is the Sachem’s Hole. Tradition says that when the Eagle of the Montauks was carried to his grave, the bearers rested their burden here, and where the foot of their chief stood last on earth, the mourning tribe with their hands hollowed out the ground.”—*New-York Observer*.

THEY hollow’d a place with their fingers there,
Where he bravely fought and fell,—
And men stood bow’d on their bosoms bare,
And women, drooping their long, loose hair,
As if bound in their chief’s death-spell.

All still till the mournful rite was done,
Then thus spake “The Sunny Eye,”

“ The Eagle his home in the clouds hath won,
Shall his children go to the setting sun,
Where the Pale-face bids them fly ?

“ Have our hands grown cold on the battle-blade,
Shall we fly like the timid deer ?—
I have utter'd a vow for a dark-hair'd maid—
And the old priest knelt while the words were said,
And the spirits bent down to hear.

“ For a white man came, with a wound oppress'd,
And the Indian heal'd his sore,—
But he carried the girl that my soul lov'd best,
Ere my heart had lain on her trembling breast,
Where I never could find her more.

“ And they told me then how the white man's God
Would put out the ravisher's eyes ;
So I roam'd with the panther the forest sod
To find the path where his feet had trod,
And list to his doleful cries.

“ I found it not, and the maid ne'er came,
To say if they told me true ;

Then I breath'd this vow from my heart of flame,
To be a curse of the white man's name,
For his after seed to rue."

He ceased. They pass'd to the Sachem's grave,
Then turn'd to the boundless sea,—
There was stifling of hate, and of yearnings brave,
Must they leave the land that their fathers gave,
Are the red-brow'd men not free ?

Just then a billow went whooping by,
As if Manitou hurried past,
And they answer'd the sound in a battle cry,
That shatter'd the dome of the sullen sky,
Like a rattling thunder blast.

And never an hour from that time, they say,
Hath the Montauks' vengeance slept ;
And the bones of many a hard-fought fray,
That bleach in the light of their setting day,
Declare how the vow was kept.

HYMN TO THE WIND.

THE power of silence weighs
Upon this populous solitude, and the leaves
 'Neath the meridian blaze,
Lay their hush'd hearts together, and the breeze
 Summons no echoes forth,
From Nature's organ, o'er the fainting earth.

Minstrel of air! oh, sweep
The innumerable keys of its majestic pile,
 Till music wild and deep
Swell grandly through each dim, mysterious aisle,
 And its full volume make
The hoar, old sanctuary of the world awake!

I see the young leaves stir,
Where thy light fingers through their compass run,
 And, like a worshipper,
Each flower bows gently to the strain begun,

And joyous birds sing out,
And the glad waters clap their hands, and shout !

Ten thousand, thousand keys
Start cunningly to thy quick, impulsive will,
And the deep bass of seas
Moans through the small, soft cadences, that still
Weave the light summer cloud,
And woo the sweet bud from its velvet shroud.

Hark ! in the noon-light now,
Fuller and deeper waxes the refrain,
Till every mighty bough
Of the great forest reels beneath the strain,
And frighten'd, overhead,
Day, turned to blackness, shudders in its dread.

Ah ! thou hast struck, at last,
Thy diapason, and the thunder's tone,
That leaps before the blast,
Swallows all other harmonies in its own !
Wind-minstrel, thou hast blent
All nature's voices, in one groaning pent !

How it doth fill the nave
Of the great universe, and shuddering fling
Its anthem in the grave,
And now exultingly mount up, and sing
Where the faint stars alone,
With tinkling tread, march round th' Eternal's throne.

Be ye lift up, oh, gates !
Ye everlasting doors, dissolve in sound !
The mighty chorus waits
To roll new harmonies through Heaven's profound,
Till its old cedars nod,
And gladness stir the calm, wide heart of God.

1846.

SONNET.—POETRY.

It is a time to speak. Almighty God!

Is there no poet in the glorious West—

No tripod set within one breathing breast—

None that dares scatter Heaven-seed abroad—

No soul “uplifted” that doth “spurn the sod?”

Shall we thus falter from our high behest,

Fear the low scorn of fools whom we detest,

And dole sick couplets for vile souls to laud?

Speak, speak! tongue-flam’d, speak for the mighty
dead!

Speak for yourselves, and make great thoughts your
thrones,

Speak, or thick curses gather round your head,

And children’s children will insult your bones!

The blood of Saxon bards is in your soul,

Sons of the sons of song, let echoes roll!

SONNET. — THE POET.

WHOSO would be *the* Poet of this age,
Must stand near God's great heart, and list its beat ;
In Bible-wisdom he must be a sage ;—
We are grown sick of jackdaws that repeat
Monotonous chatterings about hills and vales,
Without the utterance of one Heaven-sent truth ;
For earth is growing old, and music fails
To cheer her now, that rous'd her lusty youth.
He must have learn'd to ponder and to scan
The Essential Right, so he may truly know
Each link that binds the failing race of man
To God's almightiness, for weal or woe.
This is no age a rhymer sole to be,
When Time's worn vail lets through Eternity.

THE FULLER LIFE.

“ More life, and fuller, that I want ”

ALFRED TENNYSON.

Who loathes his life ? This common air
Is purer, and this earth more fair
Than death-winds and the grave-land are.

Who loathes his life ? who pines for death ?
Who lists to what the Tempter saith ?
Who is so sick of breathing breath ?

Oh, craziness ! when pleasures pall,
Is life less life, or God not all ?
Immortal ! whither can we fall ?

What if life's mystery we dread,
Not to our hearts hath wisdom said—
Run to death's mystery instead.

All pain is separate from life ;
'Tis want of this that brings in strife,
Full being with but joy is rife.

We view that being only near,
'Tis what we do not see we fear,
We want "more life"—a light more clear.

"More life and fuller"—but to know
The mysteries that come and go
In shadows round us, to and fro.

Or else we cling to earth-born store
Like birds round some enchanted shore,
Clinging, nor rising evermore.

So dreamy hangs God's quiet sky,
So thick around earth's fair fruits lie,—
What seem we ? mere Lotophagi.

The air we breathe—these fruits we taste,
Our very sense of being waste,
Ah, fools ! forgetting where we haste.

More life—to quit this dreamful strand,
We perish in this Lotos-land ;—
God ! tear us home to thy right hand.

Oh, brothers ! speak no more of death,
List rather what the God-word saith,
“Being hangs not on human breath.”

Our life is dim—from zone to zone
The Infinite is round it thrown ;
We have not all which is our own.

Look with me on God’s silent night,
Each star sits in yon crownless height,
In its empyreal splendors dight !

Save one that pales upon its pyre,
As if its mighty heart of fire
Were failing of intense desire.

’Tis but sublim’d to thy weak eyes,
As, when the morning sun shall rise,
Its sisters will be in the skies.

The winds that struggled all the day,
Or kiss'd the flowers in am'rous play,
Where are they fled to? can ye say?

Silence from all sounds merg'd is wrought,
As from all hues no hue is caught—
God is the corporate Ens they sought.

All things are tending to their source :—
Why should *we* sicken in the course,—
Give boundless hope for fearful worse ?

Oh, brothers ! speak no more of death,
List rather what the God-word saith,
“ Being hangs not on human breath.”

What should *we* pray for, but to be
Merg'd in that fuller entity ?—
“ Unclothed,”—no ! “ clothed upon,” that we,

Our mortal with th' Immortal blent,
May know and feel what is unkent
In the clay house where we are pent !

Life—life we want, and freer wings,
To pierce this hue of outward things,
This soul-garb of the King of kings !

We do not crave Death's leaden rod,
We die while in this earthly clod,
We want "full life"—the life of God !

1847.

THE CLOUD.

As new and as pure look'd the blue of the sky
As if God had that eve first unroll'd it,
And each blossom was lifting its delicate eye
From the earth, where it sat to behold it.

The landscape was vocal—bright birds flutter'd down
Through the azure, and warbled their numbers,
And the Day-king had left on the mountains his crown,
And departed in peace to his slumbers.

How calm was that moment! how sweetly unroll'd
Lay the earth on the bosom of even,—
But not to my heart were its blossoms and gold
So fair as one form in the heaven.

For a silver-rob'd cloud, where the bright cheek of day
With the kiss of the sun was yet burning,
Like a white sail outspread in the distance away,
To its haven of glory was turning.

I follow'd its form as it floated along,—
(How deep was my spirit's emotion !)
And I thought of the bark we are all guiding on
Through the depths of a treacherous ocean.

It melted in brightness—I pray'd as it rose
That when life I am call'd to surrender,
The sunshine of God might illumine its close,
And my being go out in its splendor.

1845.

RURAL HYMN.

OH, not alone do they,
Who crowd in dusty cities, joyance find ;
Heaven's gifts surround our way
More freely in the country ;—here the wind
Bends from the blue and sings,
All day in gladness, to earth's sinless things.

Here sunshine longest dwells,
And the glad waves go dancing in its light,
And the green grass upswells,
And the rich harvest stretches on the sight,
And by the water's brink
Stoops many a trembler its fair form to drink.

The painted birds glance through
The twinkling leaves, and their deep gladness pour,
Or flutter down the blue
To hold fond dalliance with some blushing flower,

And harsher sounds ne'er come
Than birds, and breezes, and the wild bees' hum.

Peace, like a presence, reigns
O'er all the hills infold—the dwellers in
God's vast and silent plains
Hear his still voice, unbroken by the din
Of echoing "steps, that beat,
Like Autumn rain," the city's crowded street.

And, therefore, poets say,
"God made the country,"—for his smile they trace
On the blue sky all day,
And when the stars are printed on its face,
His audible spirit seems
To sing a lullaby to land and streams.

1846.

TO AN EVENING CLOUD.

RADIANT dreamer in regions fair !
Beautiful phantom of sun and air !
I mark thy shape where thou seem'st to lie
A deeper sunshine on yonder sky,
Bathing thy form in all glorious hues,
Drinking the soul of the evening dews,
Lifting now like an angel's wing,
And my heart doth bless thee—beautiful thing !

Chameleon shape ! in thy changeful shroud,
To what shall I liken thee—summer cloud ?
Now, as thou risest, thy robes of gold
Round thy argent bosom in beauty roll'd,
Stirr'd by naught save the hymning sound
Of the orbèd ones as their choir go round,
Thou look'st a sprite in th' Empyrean broad,
Leaning thy brow on the hand of God !

Never a moment the same—a thought
With every change of thy form is wrought.
Now thou seem'st list'ning the weird-like breeze,
Touching his swift, mysterious keys ;
Now like a maiden's, sovran and bare,
Trembles thy breast on the wooing air ;
Now are thy fleecy robes outspread
Like a tufted floor for the young stars' tread.

Changed yet more ! from thy fiery hand
Thou'rt hurling in terror the lightning brand ;
Thy robe is the darkness—the thunder thy tread,
The Earth is a chaos—the stars are dead !
Away, and away on thy rapid flight !
Thou art seen no more on the brow of night,
And naught is above but the soft, sweet tune
Of the low wind lulling the frighten'd moon.

Glorious Spirit ! I would I could be
In the Heaven of genius a thing like thee ;
Bending never my wing to earth,
Living each moment in changeful birth,

Drinking the bloom of the blessed throng,
Borne by invisible breathings on,
A beauty and terror to mortal eyes,
Rushing in glory to Paradise.

1846.

F L O W E R S .

ARRAY'D in garments of Paradise,
Turning to Heaven your fair, meek eyes,
Mocking the glory of human pride,
Flinging your incense on every side ;
Emblems of beauty, and types of love,
Lifting the heart to its home above ;
Light of the vanishing summer hours,
I bless my God for the gift of flowers.

Beautiful visitants !—every where
Ye come to lighten the heart of care ;
Blooming in palaces—idly thrown
In childrens' paths—round the dull grave-stone ;
Passionless—pure—in your robes of light,
Ye know no sorrow—ye have no night ;—
Pencilings of angel hands are ye ?
Tell they their loves by your gift, as we ?

Children of sunshine ! doth there not dwell
Some spirit of light in each painted cell ?
Go they not out in beauty and song ?
Breathe they not peace, as they glide along ?
Have ye no voice, as stars, that shout
The rapturous bliss of their gladness out,
Mingling its music in mystic tie
With the soul of the Earth's rich symphony ?

Vain, oh ! vain, ye are simpler things—
Hope in the heart from your beauty springs—
Born to throw o'er the quiet sod
The peaceful, visible smile of God—
Flaunting your robes of purple and gold,
Drooping, and dying e'er summer be told,
Pageants of splendor, soon passing away—
Emblems of Paradise—types of decay.

God, whose smile is the summer's glow—
God, whose love is the gorgeous show
The seasons bear in their changing hours
Of varying hues, and bright, bright flowers.

Thou, who givest each garment fair
The tremblers that sit by the streamlets wear—
Grant that my life, like these, may be
Adorn'd with the grace of *humility*.

1844.

FADED FLOWERS.

TRUANTS from Paradise,
That in your glory neither toil nor spin !
What dims the heavenly lustre of your eyes ?
Ye have no stain, nor sin.

Clad by your Father's care
In robes more gorgeous than are kings array'd ;
Gayly ye flaunt your garments on the air
One little hour, and fade.

Yearn ye for Heaven once more ?
Are there fair bowers where ye may bud and bloom ?
Do angel hands transplant you on the shore
Of light beyond the tomb ?

Or steals your soul to breathe
The love ye symbol to that world of joy ?
Do its bright ones, when flowers we idly wreath,
Regard our blest employ ?

Bright gifts of God—can He
Paint your fair robes, nor heed you when ye fade ?
Cares He not for his children ? are not ye
In his own bosom laid ?

Peace, peace ! the self-same hand,
That decks the lily in its gorgeous pride,
Marks every trembler, though remote it stand
By the still waters' side.

And when they bow in death,
Garners their beauty in the willing heart,
But leaves upon them his own fragrant breath,
When all their hues depart.

FATHER ! so keep my life,
Bright in thy hand each swift-revolving day,
Acting its part thus meekly in the strife,
And turn'd to Thee alway :—

That when the time shall come
For me to fade, e'en as the flowers, and die,
Like heavenly fragrance some good action done,
May on my memory lie.

THE WINDS.

WE have our birth where the shadowy earth
Wheels round through the yielding air,
In the atoms she flings from her rushing wings
On the firmament blue and bare ;—
And the brooding sun, that quickens each one
By the glow of his sanguine breast,
Reels sickly and dim as his fire-plumes swim
Through the whirl of our wak'd unrest.
We trail his vermilion o'er heaven's pavilion,
And out of the home of dews
We scatter the stores of "the ocean and shores,"
And deep in its tint infuse ;—
And then again we are blowing amain
Our weird-work through the skies,
Till trembling and bare of her mist-robe there
The earth in his ardors lies.

We wander at will by the pleasant rill,
Through the livelong summer day,
And loosen the curls of the dark-eyed girls,
In our wild and wanton play ;
We call from the frore, sleeping earth her store,
We poise o'er the hyacinth's bell,
And the sweet eclipse of the violet's lips
We woo till it feels the spell,
And rock'd in our arms its dainty charms
It gives, as a maiden gives,
When, with never a sigh, she hath stay'd her eye
On him in whose love she lives.—
The spirits that glance on a viewless lance,
When the noontide glory burns,
We are wooing in song till they scatter along
Rich gifts from their golden urns ;
And so all the while of the heaven's blue smile,
We float on a languid wing,
And murmur and creep where the rose-scents sleep,
And the crystal wavelets spring.

We weave the shroud of the tent-like cloud,
And pillow it on our breast,

When it seems to lie in the gold-lit sky,
Like a white-wing'd dove at rest ;
And the radiant hair of the sunset fair
We toss on its blooming side,
Till it blushes as red o'er the Day-god's bed,
As blushes a new-made bride,—
And all the night by the faint starlight,
With our nursling in our arms,
We are waiting the spell of the spirits that dwell
In the smile of the Storm-king's charms.
And when the rack of their hurrying track
Glides into the cloud's dark pall,
We wing the beam of the fiery stream
That mortals the lightning call ;
And the dim orbs reel as the burst they feel,
And groaneth the dark earth under,
While we follow after with roaring laughter
The genii that call in thunder.
The shadowy arch of their fiery march
Like a shriv'ling parchment flies,
But we batter its woof till, no longer rain-proof,
It drops from the vaulted skies,
And while it distils o'er the plains and hills
Its treasures of hail and rain,

We are strewing the trees with our wings and these
As a thresher strews the grain ;—
And then through a rift in its horrible drift
We seek the Empyrean's breast,
And whistle a tune to the "ragged moon,"
In her ghostlike garments drest,
Till her turning pole with a golden roll,
Spins steeper down the west.

We sail o'er the sea where the mariners be,
Guiding their sprite-like vans,
And dreaming of home, as they wearily roam,
Are cursing the sun and calms,—
We hollow the deep for the Ouphes that sweep
Through coral groves bright and rare,
To lure by the rays of their moonstone gaze
The dead to their slumbers there ;
While the damnèd wail of the sea-maids pale
Roars blank through each cavern wide,
And the dulse is seen o'er the changeful green
To weep in a blood-red tide ;
Till the surging sound of the waves around
Closes over the dead and these,

And won by the love of the Fire-god above,
We are lulling the angry seas,
That the calmèd brine in his sweet sunshine
Lies still as a pulseless breeze.

O'er valley and hill by a boundless will,
Through clime and through time we go,
And the stores of the main we scatter again
In water, and hail, and snow.
Rich odors we bear from the vineyards rare—
Disease from the fev'rish zone ;
We mingle our song, as we sweep along,
With the laugh and the dying groan.
We scatter the seeds o'er the earth that breeds,
We watch for the opening flower,
And feed it with dew * when its heart is new,
And fondle it every hour,—
The Harmattan blast that scorcheth past
The fierce Euroclydon,
And the Samiel are the robes we wear,
When our fury driveth on.—

* “ And the young winds fed it with silver dew.”—SHELLEY.

From pole to pole like a fiery soul,
Hath our fearful presence been,
And ye hear our sound, but where we are bound,
No mortal hath told, we ween.

1847.

THE RAINBOW.

“ Theme of primeval prophecy,
Be still the poet's theme.”

CAMPBELL.

“ It left my full soul like the wing of a dove,
All fluttering with pleasure, and fluttering with love.”

AMELIA.

THE sunshine smiled out, like the Being who made it,
In peace o'er the face of that rapturous scene,
And the landscape looked fresh as if God had array'd it
That eve, for the first, in its mantle of green.

The clouds that the thunder-wind all day had driven,
Were tow'ring like pillars of fire in the west,
And betwixt their huge forms, by Omnipotence riven,
Look'd out the sweet blue from the land of the blest.

'Neath the wing of the light breeze the foliage was
dancing,—

Like atoms of sunshine amid the dark trees,
Bright birds in the plumage of heaven were glancing,
Till the forest all flutter'd with rain-drops and these.

I was lone and dejected,—the evil words spoken
Of the songs that the Minstrel-boy lightly had sung,
Had o'erwhelm'd me, and deeply I yearn'd that some
token
Of love, and of hope to my soul might be flung.

As I scornfully turn'd, in most exquisite sadness,
To cover each beautiful thought with a shroud,
I was melted to tears by a vision of gladness
That rose to my view on the face of the cloud.

For lovelier far than the bright hues of even
Were its tints interwoven with infinite grace,
As her mirror reflection held up in the heaven,
And the smile of the Deity beam'd on its face.

Oh ! 'twas glorious to see it thus calmly unfolded,—
Like the thought of a poet it sprang into birth,
And it stood like a fabric his fancy had moulded,
Its key-stone in heaven, its base on the earth.

The birds dimm'd its bright disk, all joyously singing,
As they fled with the tidings to heavenly bowers ;
While beneath it fair spirits from gold urns were flinging
Their sweetest of fragrance and fairest of flowers.

As I gazed, like a child, on the radiant vision,
Like the thoughts of a child came my memories sweet,
And I dream'd yet once more of the prospects Elysian,
And "the treasures of gold" that were hid at its feet.

How flutter'd my heart for awhile with emotion !
As each fancy of childhood rose bright on my view,
Till it melted away in yon limitless ocean,
And my dreams, with the rainbow, had fled away too.

I know, oh, I know that my future existence
Will be link'd with full many a moment of pain,
Yet I would not shrink back from one hour in the distance,
How lonely soe'er, could I dream thus again !

But sweeter, far sweeter, the promise it left me,
For my God in those bright tints spake thus to my fears,
“When I’ve smitten thy pride, and of friends have be-
reft thee,
Look up ! and my rainbow I’ll paint from thy tears.”

1845.

LINES TO S——.

LADY ! I will not wear
A beauteous seeming ; I'll be false no more—
Here, on thy gaze, this madden'd heart I'll tear,
Even to its very core.

My song shall be wrung out
In bitterness, and to the base world cast :
Why care I longer for its envious shout,
More hollow than the blast ?

Have I not spoke sweet words
Of hope, and memory, and woman's trust ?
Have I not chanted like the summer birds
Lays for its ear of dust ?

Have I not tried to wake
Its dull heart into action ? have I not
Made life and love their holiest image take—
God ! only for the sot ?

The world is false—not I,
For I have thrown most precious jewels forth,
And in my heart far costlier offerings lie,
Like gems within the earth.

And 'twas within that heart
To sing more sweetly than I yet had sung ;
But I have felt its tend'rest fibres start—
Lady, it is unstrung !

I tell thee I have yearn'd
For love, nor found it ; like a steadfast flame,
Consuming but itself, my soul hath burn'd
For the bright goal of Fame.

I threw myself away
To be a driveler for the world's applause ;
I moulded my soul's visionings, till they
Look'd like material laws.

I would have given all—
Yea, all the promise that this fond life hath,
But to be borne 'neath Genius' awful pall,
With glory round my path.

I dream no more of this,
Nor will I wake those earnest songs again ;
I am a candidate for common bliss,
And that with common men.

Yet did I think that Love,
The pure, the truthful, was not all a name ;
I have been taught it dwells in realms above—
'Tis emptier here than Fame.

I treasur'd in my soul
The smiles that to my youthful days were dear ;
Love was not, long ere I had reached its goal,
And now I can but sneer.

I heard my friends revil'd,
Till the blood mounted to my burning cheek ;
I saw contempt when they who wore it smil'd—
And now I can but speak.

Oh, we are fools, in sooth !
Our very hearts are pander'd for a smile ;
Reckless we barter innocence and truth
For this world's luring guile.

Then why should Poet sing
Of love, or cover treach'ry with a mask ?
Backward the world these precious offerings fling.—
Heart, to thy solemn task !

The task to gather up
Thy mock'd oblations on a senseless shrine.—
Thanks ! for this once there has no painted cup
Been given from hands of mine.

I would I had been born
With treble my endurance—that my heart
Could lift itself above the base world's scorn,
Nor feel its love depart.

Lady, thou canst not know
How very soon my dreamings will expire,—
How soon their madden'd memories I'll throw
Upon the quivering lyre.

I will not be the slave,
To pander thus my soul's unvalued store—
Thought—feeling,—sooner dig thyself a grave,
And rot for evermore.

Old man ! thy heart of dust ;—
I'll give thee for it all my hope of days.
Child of ambition, pride, and worldly lust—
Would I could rest always !

1845.

“PONDER BOLDLY.”

“Ponder boldly, 'tis a base
Abandonment of reason to resign
Our right of thought.”

BYRON.

In the clashing of opinions,
Young men! seek some lofty aim;
Be not ye the crouching minions
To a selfish, vaunted name.
Proudly burst the iron fetters
Superstition loves to bind—
What are creeds but dreamy letters?
Live for God—the truth—thy kind.

Truth, though pure and Heaven-descended,
God makes free to all that seek;—
Ye are Priests in union blended
With its Author—dare to speak!

Priests at its great Inquisition,—
Scorn all other slavish bands ;
Priests by loftier imposition
Than the laying on of hands.

“Ponder boldly,” dare ye stifle
“Truth’s high promptings,” and the heart
Of its holiest yearnings rifle,—
Will ye act the coward’s part ?
What’s Tradition but a story !
What are sects but idle dreams !
Ponder, till Truth’s dawning glory
Through their darkness brightly beams.

Sect or Party—whatsoever
Standard others choose to bear—
Think ! the earnest soul was never
Satisfied with empty air ;
And though many a bosom tender
Fail you in this trying hour,
Be ye only Truth’s defender,
God himself will give you power.

When ye hear the lute Temptation,
 Be your brow with thought o'ercast,—
 What is wealth or gorgeous station
 To a truthful heart at last ?
 “Ponder boldly,” rest unshaken,
 Though your cause should seem to fall,—
 Truth but slumbers—'twill awaken,
 Ye shall stand by error's pall.

Shrink not from your stern high duty
 When delirious words ye hear ;
 Worship neither wealth nor beauty,
 Stricken hearts they cannot cheer.
 Seek some high and noble spirit,
 Costlier than all beside,
 She that burneth to inherit
 All your power, and hope, and pride.

Young men ! arm yourselves for action,—
 See, they come, life's motley crowd !
 Stand before each rival faction
 Independent, fearless, proud !

“Ponder boldly,” act, or cherish
Yearning thoughts and hopes no more,
Anchorless your bark will perish
Ere it toucheth Heaven’s shore.

1845.

THE CLOSE OF SUMMER.

'Twas the last eve of summer—the sun had gone down,
And had left on the mountains his robe and his crown,
And the hues of their glory still flash'd in the sky,
Till the moon and the stars, that were riding on high,
Caught up the bright links, and each orb dancing on,
Came out in fair garments, and burst into song,
While the Spirit of Fragrance, yet roaming about
Through the earth and the air, pour'd its offerings out.

I mus'd on the scene—'twas surpassingly sweet—
The gold-spangled verdure that slept at my feet,
The bright, dewy watchers that hung in the sky,
And each fair little cloud that went blushing by,
While the winds as they pass'd sent their melodies out,
And the wild-warbling waves answer'd back with a
shout.—

'Twas enchanting.—My spirit soon wander'd away
To bathe in the fragrance, and melt in the ray,

When a vision rose up, and I deem'd that it woke
From the last breath of summer these words, that were
spoke :

“Why heed we Time's flight, when it bears us along
Down the stream of a life full of sunshine and song,—
When the voice of the Past calls no memory back,
To throw its dark shade o'er the joy of our track,
When the hearts that we lov'd, 'neath the warm skies of
June,
Preserve in December their sweetness of tune !”

I mus'd—it was only the song of my soul,
Bidding dreams of the Past o'er its dark waters roll,
Calling up each sweet scene that my infancy knew,
Each smile that was guileless, each heart that was true ;
'Twas Mem'ry, dividing the links of my life,
And showing those free of its sorrow and strife,
In my aching breast causing the tempest to cease,
And bending above it the rainbow of Peace.

'Twas the echo of youth, when my spirit was glad,
And bright eyes were round me—how could I be sad;
When the being I lov'd in her brightness and bloom,
Had not as yet sought the repose of the tomb,—
But 'neath the bright star-light, in all the fair pride
Of her angel-like beauty, she sat by my side,
And heav'd my young heart, as the bosom of seas,
When they lie in soft dreams of their lover, the breeze.

I mus'd—and the spirit that wilder'd me then,
Like the voice of an angel, pass'd o'er me again—
Each star that came out in its brightness to sing—
Each cloud that in rapture had pois'd its bright wing—
Each wave that came dancing in song to my feet,
As the breezes rode by and woke harmonies sweet—
And that angel-like one in her beauty that died,
Whom memory brought, and set down by my side.

All woke a sweet vision of song and of fame,
Till I took down my harp, and just touch'd it again;
For I deem'd, as I deem'd in the spring-time of youth,
This world was a world full of brightness and truth;

And I said, as I then said, "When summer goes by
With its beauty and fragrance, the time is *to die*."
And the strain that I woke, though it trembled once more
In the accents of love, was not sweet as before.

And I said,—for the dream from my spirit away
Had pass'd, as had pass'd the last visions of day,
"I'll throw by the harp, it has cheated my soul,
And this heart shall no more live beneath its control;—
Though the winds and the waters have voices for me,
From the wild spell of Poesy now I am free,—
The world shall not know the sweet echoes they fling,
And this gush of my heart 's the last song that I'll sing."

1844.

SONNET.—THE NEW YEAR.

It will be as the old. Winter will run
His course, and the soft, amorous wind come forth
To hunt for violets, and the frore earth
Will put on daintiness—and then the sun
Will grow more ardent; last in pomp will come
The solemn Autumn. “God is good,” and hence
Our loveful faith in His great Providence.
And since ’tis He who orders what is done—
Who binds the stars’ “sweet influences,” who guides
“The ordinances of heaven,” who finds a path
For the swift lightning, and a way divides
For the o’erflowing waters of His wrath—
We know we shall not be forsaken here,
But shall have blessings in the coming year.

1846.

SONNET.—HUMILITY.

“ What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way ?”
MARK ix. 33.

WELL did they hold their peace. Meseems His love,
Ineffably tender, on their pride breath'd so,
“ Have I laid by my Sonship, and below
All depth descended, who wert erst above
The Hallelujahs, that my soul should prove,
For ye unshrinking must indeed be trod
The blood-red wine-press of the wrath of God,
Ere your deep sin the Father will remove !
I know your thoughts, yet fear not ; as this child,
Oh little flock ! your Master will become,
Reviling not when he shall be revil'd,
And like a lamb, when offer'd, will be dumb ;—
That so, if ye be followers of me,
Heaven's brightest crown waits Earth's *humility*. ”

SONNET.—BIGOTRY.

“OH, giant loud and blind!” great Polypheme !
Roaring and stamping in thy dome-built hall ;
Wisdom hath robb’d thee of thy visual beam,
And laughs in secret at thy sightless ball.
Thou canst oppress God’s sons but for a time,
And with his hapless souls fill up thy maw :—
What moment they but rouse in Faith sublime,
Thou in their grasp art as a withe of straw.
False brag ! thy better wisdom were to keep
Thy doors fast barr’d, and watch thy hoarded store,
The “No-man ” that is skulking ’mong thy sheep,
Will be Ulysses when he leaves the shore.
Heaven makes us feel, at times, what fools we are,
How its slight hint exceeds our boastings far.

CONRAD AND STELLA.

[*Scene.* One of the Florentine galleries. Stella, leaning upon the arm of Conrad, is gazing intently upon a painting. Conrad speaks musingly.]

CONRAD.

How like a Painter's being is to God's !
He may create in his own solitude
Forms that he loves to fill it. Outwardly
The semblances may flee, but in his heart
Dwells the creation ever, and, sometime,
The perfectness works out in future days
Of first designing.

STELLA, (*gazing on the picture.*)

'Tis most beautiful !

CONRAD.

No *true* work is a dream, nor is a thought
Of holy purity less sure than God's
To bask in its own brightness at the end.

STELLA.

I lik'd that head of Guido's we just saw,
But this is wondrous better.

CONRAD.

Guido, Foh !

Rows of Madonnas with their eyes turn'd up—
All mannerism,—'tis the soul that paints,—
Creates its like, and likes what it creates
With inexpressible earnestness ever on.
Break, heart ! if it *may* not.

STELLA.

I'm sure

You pointed out this picture once, and said
'Twas like thy child. Look on it now,—the eye
Is turned down as in pity,—a slight curl,
Nathless, of pride, is on that vermeil lip ;
I spell thy meaning. But, dear father ! say,—
Say once again those features are like mine ;
How beautiful ! alas ! thou hearest not.
Do I prate idly, father ?

CONRAD.

Stella !

STELLA.

Thou wert not wont to call me by that name.

CONRAD.

What else then should I call thee ?

STELLA.

Daughter.

CONRAD.

No !

STELLA.

And why ?

CONRAD.

The shadows of old memories
Of older dreams that wak'd them, flitted o'er
My brain so hurriedly, that I forgot,
(Pardon my thoughts,) forgot thy presence, child,
And as I felt the pressure of thine arm,
And heard thy birdlike voice, and saw
Thine image in that picture, I forgot,
And would have called thee by a tenderer name.

STELLA.

What name ? what name ? for in my thoughts hath
swung

A dim remembrance that thou once did say
Some strange fatality had brought me here.

CONRAD.

Probe not my heart too deeply. Hast thou heard
The name of him whose magic pencil gave
That canvas eloquence, and made it speak
Of beauty so bewitching ?

STELLA.

I have heard but this,
He was an outcast boy, who—

CONRAD.

Even so.—

And if thine heart can nerve itself for grief,
A moment—but a moment—I will tell
That boy's sad history.

STELLA.

Father ! I know,
If that the tale could injure thy dear child,
Thy lips would not repeat it.

CONRAD.

I am he,
The painter of that picture !

STELLA.

No ! they said

(Who told me that boy's history) that he
Met death in the Bosphorus, ere his fame
Had reach'd the ones that bore him.

CONRAD.

Oh, my child !

'Twere better so, but 'twas not—thou dost mark
The calmness of my look, as if my heart
Had ne'er been wrung by passion. Stella, I
Was a wild, visionary boy, and oft
In dreams work'd out a destiny for which
Waking I struggled—always my “boy-hopes”
Yearn'd for one form of beauty, and I ne'er
Look'd on the maidens that hung round my steps
With amorous eye, but I was wont to stray
To the lone mountain, and in airy thought
Worship my soul's ideal ; oft men chid
My wayward fancy, and our country's girls,
That seem'd divine to others, oft would bend
Their eyes upon me wooingly, and yet, and yet,
I loath'd them deeply ; with my little book
Of Poetry, that my own hands had writ,

I stole away, and to the list'ning oaks
Repeated my wild songs, nor knew that ear
Of mortal, save myself, was nigh to drink
Those wild imaginings.

STELLA.

And *was* there ?

CONRAD.

One,

But I had seen her not.

STELLA.

How knew'st thou then

She heard them ?

CONRAD.

Hear what happened to me first,
And thou'lt not need to ask.

STELLA.

Dear father, I

Dwell on thy accents breathlessly !

CONRAD.

Poor child !

I gave up dreaming for a while to seek
Food for my daily wants, and then my thoughts

Were turn'd to painting, but the same desire
Still brooded o'er me, and I tried to stamp
On canvas the bright image that my heart
Had bodied forth in Poetry. I came
To great Stambol ; and I do mind me now
Of a sweet evening as I walked along,
My easel and my painting on my arm,
That a bright face, from a high balcony,
Peer'd on me like a star, and a young voice
Warbled a song of mine to melody
That ravish'd my struck soul. I stood and gazed,
While o'er me all the visions of my life
Rush'd with bewildering brightness ; it was *she* !
My worship'd idol, and thank God ! thank God !
Her face was on my canvas. I had not
Believ'd that beauty had another seeming
From my conceptions, and my soul had clung
Like ivy round that image. Stella ! we
Do love but one created form of God,—
Or e'er to love a second it must be
The shadow of that other—dost thou mark ?

STELLA.

I cannot read thy tale.

CONRAD.

Dear child !

STELLA.

And this

Is then that picture ?

CONRAD.

No !

STELLA.

But hadst thou then

That little book of Poetry ?

CONRAD.

I had.

But as I journey'd on I sold them both.

STELLA.

No, father !

CONRAD.

Yes ! to keep the little life

I cherish'd but for her, and would have flung

Away like sea-weed, if it had not been

I hop'd some strange fatality might hap,

And I regain the painting and, ay ! more,

That it might lead to fortune. Stella ! thou

Dost read already in my bright'ning glance
The issue of my tale.

STELLA.

Father, go on !

CONRAD.

Well, even as I hop'd, that trifle was
The "open sesame" to my future life.
Next day she sent for me, and I, poor boy,
Flew gladly there.

STELLA.

And *she* was noble !

CONRAD.

She *was* ! and I a starveling—but my heart
Bore itself always loftily—and I
(So daring were my aims,) would not have feared
To woo an angel ;—but an angel never
Doted upon some "bright, particular star,"
That God had set beyond him in the realms
Of infinite space, with half the reverence,
Or the strange, wild desire, that my fond heart
Hung o'er that mortal face. Love, my dear girl,
Knows no distinctions, though a proud vain world

Have plac'd him in opinion ;—the rich lord,
Believe me, on the straining breast of her
He calls his wife, hath in his heart imagin'd
'Twas some poor girl he clasp'd, and the vile serf
Disgustingly turns off from coarse-grain'd lips,
To kiss an angel ; wedlock doth not oft
Couple but lust, for where the heart is not
There is adultery most foul—dost mark ?

STELLA.

Then thou didst love that lady ?

CONRAD.

As the swan

Pours out in dying his most luscious note,
So from my heart gush'd heaven-born sweetness forth
When that wild vision pass'd.

STELLA.

She spurn'd you then ?

CONRAD.

No, no ! but hear me on. She bade me mock
Her image on the canvas. Oh, my God !
How could I sit before that peerless eye,
And with untrembling pencil shadow forth

Her beauty on my easel ?—'twas too much.
And yet I undertook it. Day by day,
I wander'd o'er her features ; day by day,
Grew my wild passion stronger ; the slight curl
Of her young, " girlish lip," I thought, at times,
Shadow'd contempt for the poor humble boy,—
And then my hand was firmer—it would change,
And I could mark upon its vermeil line
Softness I could not mimic—and ah ! then
Falter'd my pencil ; sometimes the light threads
Of sunshine that o'erhung her ivory brow
Would float bewilderingly, as if a hand
Did toss them playfully, and then they lay,
Like golden shadows, still. It might have been
A fancy of the brain, but always to my heart
Her features changed, and every day I sat
Some startling beauty all unseen before
Burst on my sight. I know not if I gazed
Days few or many—but 'twas done at last.
There hangs that painting now.

STELLA.

Good God ! go on.

CONRAD.

She said the mock was perfect, and then brought
My first dream-effort forth, and bade me tell
Where I had seen that face, it was so like
The one I had just finished ; as she gave
The picture to me from her soft, white hand,
And stoop'd to show me where my skill had fail'd
To mimic there her image, the gold clasp
That all too negligently watch'd the folds
O'er her breast's madd'ning beauty, loos'd its hold,
And 'twixt their ravishing glow, that seem'd to blush
Unconsciously at gaze of man, my eye
Glanced on a little volume that lay there,—
My book of Poetry !

STELLA.

Oh no, 'twas not !

CONRAD.

'Twas even so, my child, but I spake not ;
Lest she should spurn me that my wanton gaze
Had dar'd to fall on loveliness so bright,
And unbeheld before. Her hair crept round
My burning temples like the invisible wind
All spiritually, and I could feel

Stealing from out the palace of her soul
Breath that seem'd like a thought, it was so pure.
I could not break the spell, and as I told
Of all the glorious visions that had swung
In dreams around me, and that vainly I
Assay'd the harp to give embodiment
To my soul's ideal, and failing here,
In desperation on the canvas flung
The shadow of my heart ; and that my eyes
Had never rested on the form my soul
Had wedded, and would only wed, until
Chance threw me in her presence ; she seem'd sad,
And rose as she would go,—came back again,
And sat beside me, and with trembling voice
Spake something that I could not understand,
About a palfrey, and a fav'rite bird,
As she had lost them ; till a flush had sprung
Up to her lashes, and a tear that stole
From her full eye was burnt up by the heat
Of her cheek instantly, and then she ask'd
My former history, which being told,
She spurn'd me not, but bade me have high hopes,
And——

STELLA.

She promis'd not to wed thee ?

CONRAD.

Even so.

STELLA.

Oh, father !

CONRAD.

And ay, more ! she flung a purse
Of golden dust before me—bade me strive
For that which men call Fame—toil—sweat—endure.

STELLA.

And didst thou ?

CONRAD.

Ay !

STELLA.

And fail'd ?

CONRAD.

What human breast
Determin'd ever, and accomplish'd not ?
Whate'er we sow we reap ; my name was heard
O'er half of Europe.

STELLA.

Then thou sought'st her hand ?

CONRAD.

The worm had claim'd it for his own before !

I tell thee—it was ashes !

STELLA.

Horrible !

But doth thy tale end here ?

CONRAD.

Stella, my heart

Leads on too hastily—we must go back.

I stood upon the balcony, where first

Glitter'd her eye upon me. The still eve

Was broken only by the Muezzin's call

To rites unholy ; o'er the city hung

The white wing of th' Almighty—studded thick

With sparkling brilliants—on the waters lay

Their shadows quiveringly, the spicy air

Droop'd with its own perfume, and all the East

Panted with love, like a pure maiden's breast,

Ere it is stilled in slumber. I do mind

How drunk my soul that scene—'twas but a moon

Since I had seen Stambol—the dazzling glow
Of tower and dome, and the Turk's crescent dwelt
On me in its first freshness. I had come
A Christian wanderer to the Prophet's home,
Nameless, and friendless, daring want and scorn,
And now a moon—a little moon had pass'd
And not an Houri in the Sultan's Harem
Shot on her lord-love more ineffable
Than fell round me. The "cunning curse" that hung
Above my spirit had been all fulfill'd,
And Zela spurn'd me not—oh God! I said
She bade me seek for fame—but it was not
That I might claim her heart—'twas mine, 'twas mine,
Already mine, but that the envious tongue
Of an accursed relative might cleave
To his foul mouth, she asked it. He had wooed
And madly claim'd her hand.

STELLA.

What didst thou then?
As doeth the mock'd lion for his mate;
Destroy! oh! horrible.

CONRAD.

I did not,—that
Were foul, in sooth, thou knowest our creed

That I have taught thee, when I bade thee say
Thine orisons to God ; “ As we forgive,
So, Father, forgive us.” Love works no ill,
And it cannot be love that foully asks
For blood, no ! no ! let the mad followers
Of the Turk’s Pagod thirst for it, we know
One remedy for ills—I shrunk from blood.

STELLA.

Had she been noble too, as well as fair,
She then had been *my* mother.

CONRAD.

Hush ! dear girl,
Thou know’st not whom thou chidest.

STELLA.

Didst thou not,
Oh horrible ! mean she had *died* when now
Thou saidst her hand was ashes ?

CONRAD.

Ah !

STELLA.

Oh, God !

CONRAD,

Bear yet a little longer ; thou hast guess'd
The end too truly. I *did* mean she died.

STELLA.

Thou, dear father,—*thou* didst not insult
Such stainless beauty ?

CONRAD.

Stella, I did ne'er
Press that fair bosom ; the life blood
That gives thy cheek its envious fullness finds
Its parent lake in other breast than mine.

STELLA.

Oh, this is terrible ! what meanest thou ?
I am undone forever !

CONRAD.

No ! but hear me through.
Thou'st but to look upon that picture now
To know she was thy mother.

STELLA.

Conrad, speak !
My heart-life trembles on thy coming words !

CONRAD.

I said we stood together on that eve
Upon the balcony—a form went by
As she return'd the pressure of my lips
And bade “the Lord be with you,” “Cursed knave,
That mock'st the Prophet at this holy hour,
Thy life shall be the forfeit,”—’twas his voice
Who oft had whisper'd in her ear the words
Of false affection—struck, I fell, and woke
A bleeding outcast at the city gate.

STELLA.

Thou saw'st her then no more ?

CONRAD.

Yes, after years.

STELLA.

What then ?

CONRAD.

Well, I had toiled, and Fame
Enwreath'd my youthful brow, my paintings stood
Beside the works of Raphael.

STELLA.

Didst thou
Still think of Zela ?

CONRAD.

Never for an hour
Had she not been beside me. Earth to me
Had ever held one look, one face, one eye,
I never loved aught else. Ever had clung
One image round my soul.

STELLA.

Well, and what more ?

CONRAD.

Is't not enough ?

STELLA.

Conrad !

CONRAD.

Forgive.—

Three years had pass'd, and once again I stood
Upon that balcony. Zela was there !
Below us, mumbling in the city streets,
Dogs fed on human bodies, a dire plague
Had slain its thousands—funerals were not ;
The ragged sails hung dangling round the masts,
Fill'd with infection, and the water lay
Stupid, and green, and waveless—all was death !

I watch'd alone o'er Zela—save her child
The pledge of ravishment, alone she breath'd
Of friends, or ravisher ; I loath'd her not,
Though she was dying—and I watch'd the plague
Blotting her holy beauty. *God !* I pray'd,
Till the last life-spark fled.

STELLA.

I now know all ?

CONRAD.

Thou dost.

STELLA.

Oh, Heaven ! and thou couldst keep the fruit
Of love thou never tastedst ?

CONRAD.

Ay ! to taste.

STELLA.

Conrad ! what meanest thou ?

CONRAD.

Does the snake sting
After all this ? thy *mother's* face is *thine*.

STELLA.

And her *heart* too—dear husband—mine—oh, God !

THE DYING POET TO HIS WIFE.

GOD be with thee, my beloved ! God be with thee in this
drear,

Dark world that I am leaving without a sigh or tear,—
Only that I tremble for thee, my beautiful ! my brave !
When the tongue that is thy life-guard shall be silent in
the grave ;

Yet a dream flits o'er my spirit that more radiant and fair,
Thou wilt meet me up in Heaven where the other angels
are,

Though how thou canst be fairer I do not, do not know—
God be with thee, my beloved ! God be with thee when
I go.

Ay, press thy lip yet closer, lay thy hand upon my brow !
Let the argent of thy bosom gleam on my dull eye now ;

Speak the words thou oft hast spoken, sing the songs thou
oft hast sung,

They will quiver o'er my trembling heart though its
chords be all unstrung.

Ah, the fire that lights the Poet's eye full often leads
astray !

His lip of honied sweetness is a lip of common clay ;
'Tis that thou loved such worthlessness my own heart
breaketh so—

God be with thee, my beloved ! God be with thee when
I go.

Oh, could I—could I leave thee my lip's defying curl !
Thy smile is all too fair for this cold-hearted world, my
girl,—

My brave one ! oh, my beautiful ! 'twill taunt thee with
my shame,

I would, as I have hurl'd it back, that thou couldst do
the same,—

Breathe thy prayers up to the Heaven—breathe them up
and up again,

Till they break like rattling thunder round the damnèd
race of men.—

There is ONE who hears his children though their words,
like thine, be low—
God will hear thee, my beloved ! God will hear thee when
I go.

The wheel will soon be broken, and the golden sands
be run,
Yet pledge me—pledge me this, beloved ! ere I go beyond
the sun—

Thou wilt live forever faithful to our solemn hearts' troth-
plight,

I cannot bear another's form shall press thy bosom bright ;
I shall wait in yonder heaven for the tinkling of thy wings,
When thou comest up all glorious beside the King of
kings—

Where our hearts shall ever mingle, and our tears shall
never flow—

God be with thee, my beloved ! God be with thee when I go.

Leave me, leave me, now, beloved ! haste thee, haste thee
through the door !

There's a dark hand draws my curtain, there's a strange
foot on my floor !

Are these angels' wings around me—these their soft lips
that I feel ?

Are these sweet tones hallelujahs for a dying Poet's weal ?

Ay, thou art very faithful—faithful even to the death !

Closer—closer then embrace me, while I give thee up my
breath ;—

Strike ! if thou wishest, Shadow—'tis enough for me to
know,

God will be with my beloved—he will keep her when
I go.

1846.

THE STARS.

BURNING in hues of quenchless light,
Fair jewels in night's azure crown ;
How soft from your empyreal height
Ye shed your silvery music down !

How calm ! methinks that hill and plain
Are hush'd to drink the breathing joy,
Joy that your souls cannot contain,
Blest gazers into heaven's employ !

How must the heart of Eden burst
With rapture, as your voices rang
In choral symphony, when first
The infant world in being sprang !

When o'er the pure, primeval earth,
Heaven's deep acclaim was heard with thine,
And the first living soul came forth
To hail the wak'ning shout of Time !

And still ye shine—years have no power
 Upon your brows their change to set,
As bright as at Creation's hour
 Your burning splendors kindle yet.

Still look your glorious company down,
 When night unbars heaven's golden door,
Still, though mad storms the blue sky drown,
 Ye sweetly shine when storms are o'er.

What marvel ancient sages burn'd
 In your bright hues their fate to trace ?
What marvel the old Sabian turn'd
 His eyes in worship on your face ?

Had I thy wings, oh, tireless dove !
 How would my spirit flee for rest
To some bright sphere of light and love
 That burns on yon Empyrean's breast !

FREE TRANSLATION :

HOR. Lib. III. C. 26.

“VIXI PUELLIS NUPER IDONEUS.”

I HAVE lived for the girls—there is truth in my story,
And I think that I’ve battled with somewhat of glory,
But the arms that I once used, I’ve hung on the wall,
And I’ll hang there myself, ere I’ll touch them at all.

My first love was Emily—my second was Sophy,
I’ve a sweet lock of hair from them both as a trophy,
Though I own I cropp’d one from my own pate to please a
Strange taste in my third, the bewitching Louisa.

Oh! days of my childhood, of “bread and of butter,”
When my sense was a bubble, my heart was a flutter,
Why should I mourn for ye, since Julia Jane
The last of my loves, now despises my chain?

THREE LIVING LINKS.

“They are only three.”

THREE living links—three living links
Are all that now remain
Of what we once so fondly call'd
Our dear, dear family chain !
And in the gracious Providence,
That e'er hath watch'd them o'er,
Far from the scenes of other days,
These three are met once more.

Three living links ! I dare not chide
The love that took the rest
From care and sorrow here, to lie
Upon His holy breast.—

Ah, no ! I think my heart would bear
The long, dark way to tread,
Sooner than call one angel back,
That to its home hath fled.

Three living links ! and one doth now
Weep with us joyous tears,
Who comes back to our yearning hearts,
The long desired of years.
His brow, perchance, is shaded more
Than ours, with thronging cares,
And none may better tell than we,
What mean those silver hairs.

Oh ! beautiful is the holy hill
Whereon another stands,
The dew of Hermon on his lips,
The peace-branch in his hands.
God stay thee, brother, in thy work,
God shield thee evermore—
And give of souls thy guerdon vast,
When toils and cares are o'er.

One other link fills up the chain,—
One little known to Fame,
And yet above some strange-wove songs
Ye may have seen his name,
For he hath tried all artlessly
To sound more wide abroad
The music that his heart-strings play'd,
Beneath the touch of God.

The others oft upon his face
With earnest gazes dwell,
I think he's more within their thoughts
Than they would care to tell;
I think, [and it may all be true,]
They fear a flood of tears
Will o'er his proud soul's fall be shed
In the succeeding years.

God, do Thou make his shoes of brass
To tread life's flinty road,
Sweeten his bread at every Inn,
And bear Thou up his load;

For he must struggle much, and put
His kindest thoughts away,
He cannot stoop to Mammon-Love,
Like other things of clay.

And well I ween a weariness
Of all beneath the sun
Hath fallen in his youth of years
Upon this self-same one ;
So much the more then, Father, make
His spirit fit for Thee,
Since with thy creatures here on Earth
No fellowship hath he.

Three living links—three living links
Are all that now remain
Of what we once so fondly call'd
Our dear, dear family chain !
The dust of death is on the rest,
Their hues have faded fast,
But so God keep the youngest one,
'Twill join in Heaven, at last.

THESE LITTLE SONGS.

“And give the worm my little store,
When the last reader reads no more.”

O. W. HOLMES.

THESE little songs that I have sung
Are very dear to me,—
I'm fain to think, my gracious friend,
That they were dear to thee ;
You've ne'er forgot how blest we sat
Beneath the list'ning trees,
While I was reading on your face,
And you were reading these.

Or, how, upon the self-same page
We bent with earnest look ;
Our heads full closely met above,
Our hands beneath the book ;—

Oh, rapturous hours ! oh, golden time !
What joy their mem'ry weaves,—
Our hearts read on although the breeze
Kept flutt'ring o'er the leaves.

Oh, golden time ! but I have learn'd
The Poet's dower since then,
To bear a keenly tortur'd soul
Among unfeeling men.
I sit beneath God's silent night,
None hear the words I say,
And bear this everlasting flame,
That drinks my life away.

I've struggled long,—I've struggled hard,—
I've eat the bread of care,
I've wrung my heart out for these songs,
My lot is hard to bear,—
'Tis oh ! but to be dreaming on—
'Tis oh ! to vainly pine
For blessedness in days to come,
I knew in days "lang syne."

I turn my book of Poems o'er,
My eyes fill up with tears,
How shall I dare to give the world
These buds of early years !
I feel e'en now its blast of scorn
Uprooting all my breast,
As when a whirlwind demon tramps
The great woods of the West.

Dear heart ! sit by me, in my need,
Speak but of what I've been,
I fear me I shall yet be left
To tread the paths of sin.
Oh ! lay your hand once more on mine,
And say 'twill not be so,
That he who sang such precious words,
Can never stoop so low.

I may not tell e'en thee what change
Hath o'er my spirit pass'd,
Since you and I,—two happy souls,
Read my strange verses last,—

Oh ! I was dreaming wildly then
Of what might never be,—
It breaks my heart !—the very thought
They may be naught to thee.

Ah, me ! there's nothing left me now
But wrecks of idle dreams,
My thoughts float on, like shatter'd barks,
Adown the silent streams,
My heart is woe for youth and thee,
For joys forever flown ;—
I'll write no more,—I have no power
To read my songs alone.

1847.

SONNET.—L'ENVOI.

TO THE REV. J. M. A.

DEAR brother! if thy love left room for aught,—
Then, by thy solemn office, would I plead,—
Search, if some line be not to beauty wrought,
Winnow all well, lest thou lose some good seed.
I know how slightingly the world esteem
“New Poems, by young Poets,” therefore I
Commend these fancies of my youthful dream
To thee, to view in all sincerity.
I feel most impotent;—yet, if desire,
And earnest faith have prompted to this deed,
If only I fail not, but still aspire,
I shall have comfort in my sorest need;—
There *is* who, from the Triumphs “soft and low,”
Will whisper to me, “Son! arise and go.”

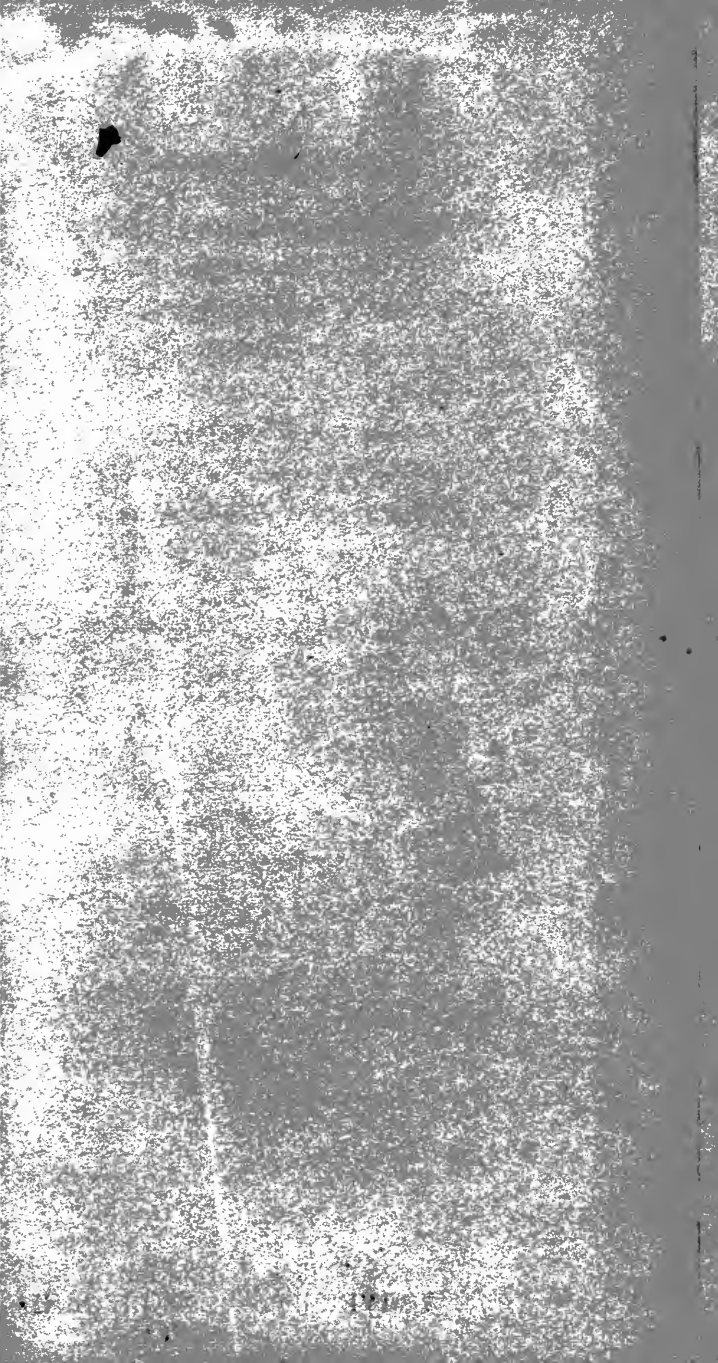
NEW-YORK, Sept. 9, 1847.

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